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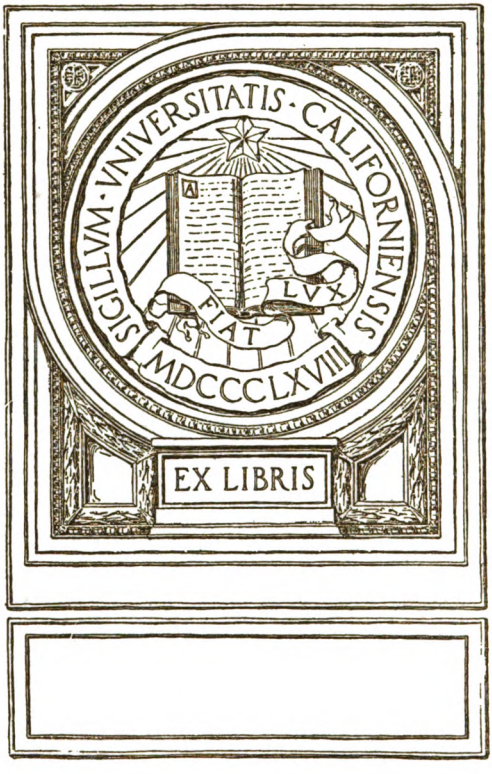

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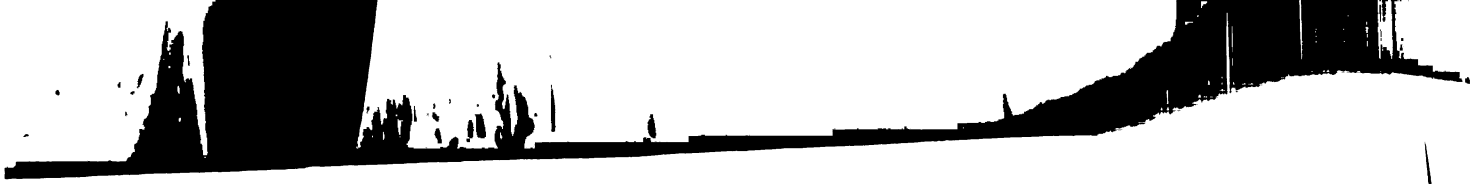

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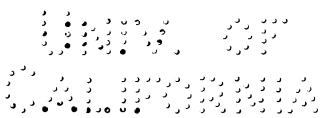

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H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
COLONEL-IN-CHIEF, 6TH RAJPUTANA RIFLES

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NAPIER'S RIFLES

The History of the 5th Battalion,
6th Rajputana Rifles

BY

H. G. RAWLINSON
Indian Educational Service

चिरंजीव त्यांचें जगीं नाम राही.

'Their name liveth for evermore.'

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1929

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.,
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REGIMENTAL STANDING ORDER No. 12, OF 29TH DECEMBER, 1893, BY LT.-COLONEL H. S. TANDY, COMMANDING 25TH REGIMENT.

'All officers on joining the Regiment are expected to read and make themselves acquainted with the Historical Record of the Regiment, which is full of interesting matter connected with the campaigns and actions in which the Regiment has taken part, and in which it has invariably won for itself Honour and Renown.'

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due to: Mr. John Murray for permission to reproduce the map of Gwalior Fort from *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon;* Messrs. Cassell & Co., Ltd., for the plans of the battles of Shaikh Saad, Sannayat and Istabulat from *The Long Road to Baghdad* by Edmund Candler; the Council of Army Historical Research for the picture of the battle of Hyderabad; the Parker Gallery for the picture facing p. 80; the Central Publicity Bureau, Indian State Railways, for the photograph of Jhansi Fort; Major-General Rajwade for the photograph of Gwalior Fort; Lt.-Colonel R. Waller for the two sketches facing p. 109; Messrs. Swaine & Co. for the photograph of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

I have endeavoured, in the appendixes and footnotes to chapters, to express my obligation to officers, past and present, of the Regiment, who have helped me in my task by allowing me access to family papers, lending me pictures and sketches for reproduction, and supplying me with their personal reminiscences. I take the opportunity, in this connexion, especially to thank Lt.-Colonel F. H. Maynard, M.C., and Captain T. W. Rees, M.C., D.S.O., for their very kind help in this respect.

The fine picture by an unknown artist of the battle of Meeanee, reproduced to face p. 40, was painted to the order of Sir George (then Captain) Hutt, who commanded the Horse and Mule Battery of the 3rd Company, Bombay Artillery, at the battle. He is seen in the picture, mounted and pointing his sword to the front.

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The original, a water colour, is in the possession of his daughter-in-law, Mrs. G. W. Hutt, of Luptons, South Weald, Essex. It is reproduced, by the kindness of Lt.-Colonel Maxwell, O.B.E., M.C., of the 1st Battalion, the Cheshire Regiment (formerly H.M. 22nd Regiment), from a copy hanging in their mess.

POONA, H.G.R.
March, 1929

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PREFACE

THE history of Napier's Rifles, as set forth in the following pages, has been undertaken by Lt.-Colonel Maynard at a most propitious time, when, owing to the numerous changes of title that the battalion has undergone in recent years, there was a danger that their brilliant achievements in the past might be forgotten or lost sight of, amid those of the other four battalions of the corps of the 6th Rajputana Rifles to which they now belong, and that thereby the interest of past, present and future officers might have suffered.

This history, compiled from the regimental records and traditions of the battalion, gives a thrilling account of the services rendered in the various campaigns in which they were engaged, and from which they emerged with added honours and reputation; it shows the connexion of the regiment with General Sir Charles Napier, since when his name has always been associated with it.

It will be a lasting tribute to the gallant services rendered by the battalion throughout the Great War, in France, Egypt and Mesopotamia, and a memorial to those who gave their lives for their King and Country and their Regiment.

C. I. FRY, *Major-General,*
Colonel of the 5th Bn. 6th Rajputana Rifles

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THE LAST MARATHA WAR

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CHAPTER I

THE LAST MARATHA WAR

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena of the seventeenth century in India was the rise of the Marathas. The Marathas are typical hillmen, small and plain when compared to the dashing Sikh or haughty Rajput, but laborious, hardy and persevering. If they have none of the pride of the Rajput, they have none of his indolence or want of worldly wisdom. A Rajput, Elphinstone says, as long as he does not dishonour his race, seems almost indifferent to any contest he is engaged in. But to a Maratha the result is all-important, and to attain it he will strain his wits, renounce his pleasures, and hazard his life; he will not fail in boldness or enterprise when they are indispensable, and will support them by strategy, activity and perseverance. All these characteristics were exhibited by the great Sivaji, the founder of the Maratha race (1627–80). When he was born, at Junnar in the Deccan Ghats, not far from Poona, his country was the battleground of the warring Muhammadan states which had arisen out of the Bahmani Kingdom of the fifteenth century. From early boyhood Sivaji had been inspired with one aim, to free his country from Muslim thraldom; and the story of his great struggle is one of the romances of history. He began by annihilating an army sent against him under Afzal Khan, the Bijapur general, in the dense jungle near the present hill-station of Mahableshwar; he raided Poona and surprised the Governor, Shaista Khan, uncle to the Emperor Aurangzeb, in his bed; when taken to Delhi, he made a miraculous escape, and reappeared once more in the field; and when he died, he was the undisputed ruler of the Maharashtra. But the great king was scarcely in his grave when Aurangzeb determined on the re-conquest of the Deccan. A mighty

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army slowly mobilized at Ajmir. Bijapur and Golconda surrendered. In 1689 came the turn of the Marathas. Sambhaji, the son of Sivaji, was captured and executed with horrid tortures. Two years later, the Marathas were swept clean out of the Deccan; the surging flood of Muhammadan invasion had reached Tanjore and Trichinopoly, and they were clinging desperately to their last stronghold, the fortress of Gingee. But now the tide began to turn. The Moghul had sped his bolt; and, inch by inch, the Imperial army was forced to retreat. The Marathas avoided pitched battles, but day and night the enemy was harried, until at last the Deccan was evacuated, and Aurangzeb died, a broken man, near Ahmednagar, whence he had set out with so much pomp and glory a quarter of a century before.

This story of the rise of the Maratha power is of more than mere academic interest. It is not simply a tale of

> Old, unhappy far-off things,
> And battles long ago.

It shows us, in a very practical manner, whence our Bombay sepoys got that stubborn endurance which they have exhibited on a hundred stricken fields, from Kirkee in 1817, to Kut-el-Amara a century later. In 1840, when General John Jacob had to select men to form an artillery company for service in the burning Sind desert, where no European soldier could live, and the thermometer went up to 130° and 140° every day, he took, not Sikhs or Rajputs, but men from the Bombay Native Infantry 'the true descendants of Sivaji's mountain rats, whom not all the pride and power of the armies of Hindustan could prevent from marching to the gates of Delhi'. He describes them as 'small and not at all good-looking, but of an amazing energy and activity and full of zeal and courage, with sinews that no labour could tire and hearts that no danger could taint'.

By 1720 the power had passed from the House of Sivaji into the hands of the Peshwa or Prime Minister, and the kings became mere *rois fainéants*, living in retirement

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at Satara. The first Peshwa was a clever Chitpavan Brahmin, named Balaji Visvanath, and he was succeeded by his son, Bajirao I. The Peshwas lived in state at the Shanwar Wada at Poona, which became the centre of a mighty empire. Subordinate kingdoms, carved out of the crumbling Moghul Empire by Maratha generals, arose in Gwalior, Indore and Baroda, and other parts of central and southern India; the Maratha horsemen watered their steeds in the Indus at Attock, raided Calcutta, and swept through the Carnatic as far as Tanjore. In 1761, a great Maratha army, containing the flower of their race, was cut to pieces by the Afghans at Panipat, after a Homeric battle which lasted nearly all day. It was a Pyrrhic victory, for the Afghans were so badly shaken that they had to retreat beyond the passes without delay, but the Marathas never really recovered from the shock. By the end of the century, Poona was the centre of a scene of utter anarchy and confusion, which reached a climax on the death of the last great Maratha statesman, Nana Farnavis. In 1802, the Peshwa, Bajirao II, fled to Bassein, and there he was compelled to make a treaty with Colonel Close, the British Resident at Poona, by which he agreed, as the price of his restoration to the throne, to pay twenty-six lakhs a year for a subsidiary force of not less than six battalions stationed in his dominions, and to recognize the suzerainty of the British, exercised through their Resident. Thus did Bajirao Peshwa 'sacrifice his independence as the price of protection'. It was a choice of evils, and he chose the lesser one; but he had no intention to abide by the treaty, if an opportunity arose to evade it. For the first twelve years of the nineteenth century, as a result of the 'non-interference' policy of Sir G. Barlow, and Lord Minto's preoccupation with the campaigns against the French, the state of Central India was deplorable. Organized bands of robbers, consisting of disbanded soldiers, freebooters and cut-throats of every description, known as the Pindaris, about 20,000 in number, were sweeping over the country like a swarm of locusts. Lord Hastings (Governor-General 1813-23) determined

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to stamp out these pests, and for this purpose mobilized, in the cold weather of 1817, a Grand Army of 120,000 men and 300 guns. The Maratha chiefs, all more or less in league with the freebooters, looked sourly upon these preparations, and were determined to help their compatriots should an opportunity occur.

We must now turn our attention to Poona. The Peshwa, more especially after Wellesley's brilliant victory over Sindia at Assaye (1803), was profuse in his protestations of friendship, and in 1813 he proposed to raise, in accordance with the treaty, a brigade of infantry, to be commanded and drilled by Europeans, and paid direct from the Treasury. This force was put under the command of Captain John Ford, formerly an officer of the Madras establishment and afterwards for some years on the Resident's staff at Poona, assisted by a number of picked British officers. His men, excepting a small leavening of Marathas, were chiefly raised in the Company's provinces in Hindustan, and on joining the brigade swore fidelity to the Peshwa, 'so long as he kept in alliance with the British.' The force was stationed at Dapuri, about six miles north-west of Poona. Here Ford and his officers lived in great state, in a fine castellated building which has since served as a Government House, a brewery, and a P.W.D. store. His Brigade Major was Captain (afterwards General) Peter Lodwick, the discoverer of the hill-station of Mahableshwar. Ford was on excellent terms with the Maratha generals and sirdars, including Moro Dixit, and the gallant Bapu Gokhle, who commanded the Peshwa's forces. But Mountstuart Elphinstone, the distinguished scholar, diplomatist and soldier, who had succeeded Colonel Close as British Resident at Poona in 1810, was not prepared to trust Bajirao's fair words and protestations. He was, doubtless, aware of the intrigues of Karshedji Modi, the wily Parsee who had acted as his predecessor's agent, but had intrigued continuously with the Peshwa. A deliberate affront had been offered to the English, when Gangadhar Shastri, the Gaikwar's minister, who was

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travelling under a safe-conduct given by the British Government, was insolently murdered in the streets of Pandharpur by the hired assassins of Trimbakji Denglia, the Peshwa's low favourite. Under great pressure, Trimbakji was given up and imprisoned in Thana Fort, but he had, with the Peshwa's connivance, escaped, and was now in hiding in the vicinity of Poona. Relations were becoming more and more strained every day, and war was almost inevitable. The available troops, in the event of a rupture, were less than 3,000 in all, distributed as follows:—

In the Gharpir cantonment, where the Imperial Bank and Post Office now stand, were the 2nd Battalion 1st Bombay Native Infantry, 2nd Battalion 6th Bombay N.I., and the 1st Battalion 7th Bombay N.I., with four guns, under the command of the veteran Lt.-Colonel Burr; at the Sangam Residency, now the District Judge's bungalow, was the Resident's escort, consisting of two companies of Bengal N.I.; at Dapuri, four miles distant, was Ford's brigade with three guns. Thirty-six miles from Poona, on the Ahmednagar Road, was the Sirur brigade in cantonments at that place. The Peshwa was now becoming every day more insolent in his demeanour, troops were pouring into Poona, and it became unsafe for anyone belonging to the British camp to quit their lines. Lieutenant Shaw, of the Auxiliaries, was, on the 1st of November, dismounted, within two miles of the Residency, by three of the Peshwa's horsemen, and speared in the thigh. On the same day, the British brigade at Poona changed its ground from the immediate vicinity of the city to a more tenable position at a distance of about three miles, leaving a small guard in charge of their cantonments. This measure had become absolutely necessary, not only on account of the weakness of a position towards which the enemy was closing in from all directions, thus depriving the brigade of the advantages of its discipline, but likewise owing to the unremitting endeavours of the Peshwa to corrupt the fidelity of the sepoys, to which they were the

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more exposed in proportion to their vicinity to the city. The left of the new position rested on the Kirkee bridge over the Mulla river, and its right on the village of Kirkee. This position was rather too extensive for the troops which occupied it; but it had the advantage of commanding the water, and communicating directly with the Residency, and the great roads to Sirur and Bombay.

It happened, fortunately, that the Bombay European Regiment,[1] with detachments of His Majesty's 65th Foot and of the Bombay Artillery, which were on their march from the coast to the Poona Division, had not yet passed that capital towards their northern destination. This reinforcement entered the camp at Kirkee on the 30th of October, after a forced march of thirty miles from the bottom of the Ghats.

On the 3rd November Elphinstone directed the light battalion and a party of auxiliary horse, stationed at Sirur, to move to Poona. As soon as the news of these arrangements reached the Peshwa, he determined to delay the attack no longer. His preparations began about seven o'clock on the morning of the 5th; but in the early part of the day he sent out several messages calculated to lull the Resident's suspicions; such as, that his troops were alarmed by hearing that those at Kirkee were under arms; that he was about to perform a religious ceremony at the temple of Parbati, and that the troops were drawn out in honour of the occasion, to form a street as he passed. In the afternoon, when all was in readiness, the whole of his principal officers having assembled at his place, Vithuji Gaikwar, a personal servant of the Peshwa, was despatched to Elphinstone,

[1] Afterwards the 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, familiarly known as the 'Bombay Toughs' or 'Old Toughs'. This regiment was formed out of the remnants of the unlucky force which came out in 1662 to take over the island of Bombay from the Portuguese. They were encamped on the island of Anjidiva, where they suffered terribly. They distinguished themselves at the capture of Aden (1839) and in the Sikh wars.

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by Gokhle's advice, to inform him that the assembly of troops at Poona was very offensive to the Peshwa; to desire him to send away the European regiment; to reduce the native brigade to its usual strength, after which it must occupy a position which the Peshwa would point out; and that if these demands were not complied with he could withdraw from Poona and never return. Elphinstone denied the Peshwa's right to require the removal of the European regiment, explained the reason of his having called in the light battalion, and recommended that the Peshwa should send his troops to the frontier as he had promised, in which case all cause of complaint would be removed. A good deal more passed, as the conversation on the part of the messenger was intended to engage as much attention as possible; but he at last withdrew, warning the Resident of the bad consequences of his refusal. In the meantime the Peshwa's officers at the palace were despatched to their troops; Bajirao in person proceeded to Parbati Temple; and Vithuji Gaikwar had scarcely quitted the Residency when intelligence was brought that the army was moving out on the west side of the city. There was a momentary consultation about defending the Residency, but it was instantly abandoned as impracticable, and it was determined to retire to Kirkee, for which purpose the nature of the ground afforded great facility. The river Mulla, betwixt the Sangam and the village of Kirkee, forms two curves like the letter S inverted. The Residency and the village were both on the same side of the river, but at the former there was a ford, and near the latter a bridge; so that the party, by crossing at the ford, had the river between them and the Peshwa's troops the greater part of the way. The Peshwa's troops, now entering the gardens of the Residency, set fire to everything combustible and in a short time destroyed the buildings, furniture and records. From the Residency no part of the Maratha army was visible excepting bodies of infantry, which were assembling along the tops of the adjoining heights, with the intention of cutting off the

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Residency from the camp, and, having this object in view, they did not molest individuals. On ascending one of the eminences on which they were forming, the plain beneath presented at that moment a most imposing spectacle. This plain, then covered with grain, is terminated on the west by a range of small hills, while on the east it is bounded by the city of Poona and the small hills already partially occupied by the infantry. A mass of cavalry covered nearly the whole extent of it, and towards the city endless streams of horsemen were pouring from every avenue.

'Those only who have witnessed the Bore in the Gulf of Cambay,' says Grant Duff, the historian of the Marathas, 'and have seen in perfection the approach of that roaring tide, can form the exact idea presented to the author at sight of the Peshwa's army. It was towards the afternoon of a very sultry day; there was a dead calm, and no sound was heard except the rushing, the trampling and neighing of the horses, and the rumbling of the gun-wheels. The effect was heightened by seeing the peaceful peasantry flying from their work in the fields, the bullocks breaking from their yokes, the wild antelopes, startled from sleep, bounding off, and then turning for a moment to gaze on this tremendous inundation, which swept all before it, levelled the hedges and standing corn, and completely overwhelmed every ordinary barrier as it moved.'

At a distance of about three miles to the north-westward of the city of Poona lie some hills, between which passes the road to Bombay. In that direction the Peshwa's army was assembled since morning, in expectation of orders for attacking the British force, to which it was opposite.

A high ridge of ground extended between the two positions, which were distant more than two miles. On each side flowed, in the lower ground, the Mutha river, which doubled round the rear of the British camp.

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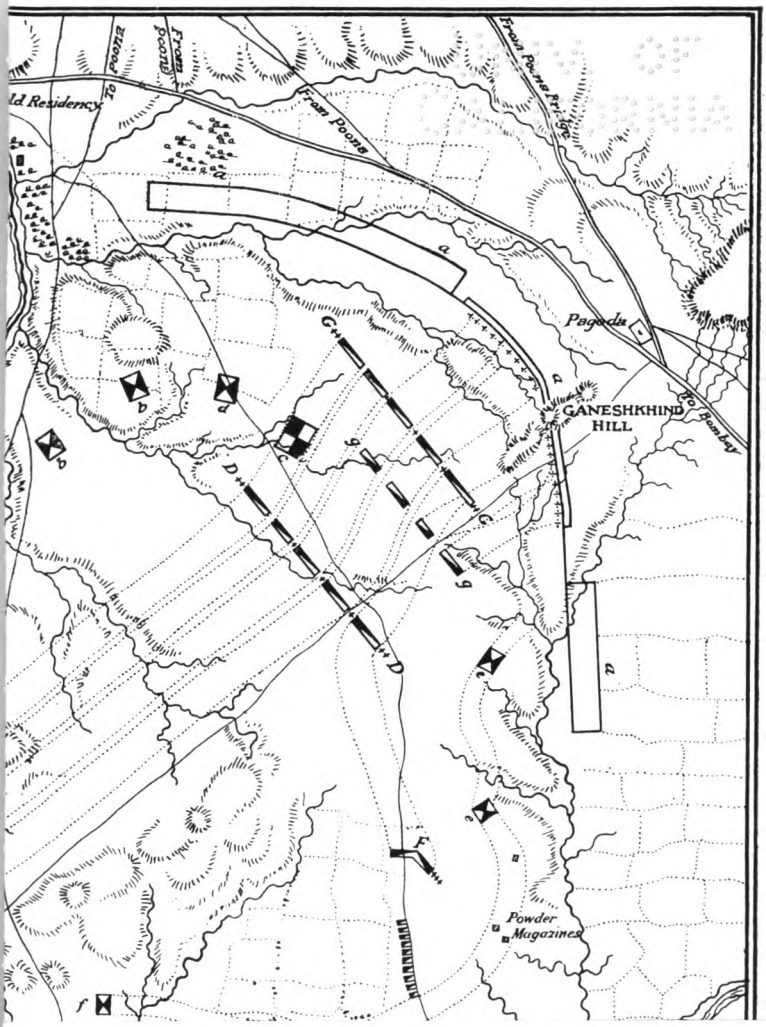

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Many ravines and water-courses joined the bed of the river from the high ground round which it flowed, and were calculated to impede any distant flank movement along the bank of the river.

The enemy's position was on strong, commanding ground. In front were a rivulet and some walled gardens; his left was at the Ganeshkhind hills, his right on the Residency, and in his rear a chain of mountains. The Vinchur horse were on the left, the guns and infantry in the centre, and large bodies of cavalry on the right and along the rear. The Maratha army was immediately commanded by Gokhle, the Peshwa having retired to the top of Parbati, to have a distant and elevated view of the action. Moro Dixit, the Minister, held a respectable command, though more considered as a politician than a soldier.

The veteran Lt.-Colonel Burr commanded the British force, and had been engaged since his removal to Kirkee in the establishment of a post for the security of his stores, treasure, provisions, and sick, before the expected crisis. He now found himself enabled to leave them under the protection of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Bombay Native Infantry, greatly weakened by small detachments, but reinforced by such details as he considered unfit to bring into action. This position, in which were placed two iron twelve-pounders, was committed to the charge of Major Roome.

During the retreat of the Resident from the Sangam, Lt.-Colonel Burr was required to move forward to meet the enemy, already in motion to commence the action. The Colonel was informed that Ford's battalion was marching to join him from its cantonment at Dapuri, situate about two miles distant in a westerly direction.

Elphinstone had personally reconnoitred the ground in front of the village of Kirkee and ascertained that there was a ford between that village and Dapuri, which, although difficult, was practicable for six-pounders, three of which, manned by native artillerymen, belonged to the auxiliary force and were attached to Captain

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Ford's corps. It had been arranged, in the case of an attack, that Captain Ford was to join the brigade under Lt.-Colonel Burr; and Elphinstone had been at pains to explain to all concerned the advantage of always acting on the offensive against Marathas.

The force accordingly selected a position about a mile further in advance. It was joined by the Resident with the guard from the Sangam, and formed, in expectation of receiving here the reinforcement under Captain Ford. In the centre were the Bombay European Regiment, the Resident's escort, and a detachment of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Regiment; on the right and the left were the 2nd Battalion of the 1st, and the 1st Battalion of the 7th Regiments, and on each of their outer flanks two guns.

It was now about four p.m.; and as the Dapuri battalion approached, the force again advanced, while the enemy threw forward his cavalry in masses on the right and left, for the purpose of passing to the rear of the British force, between it and the river. Immediately afterwards, a brisk cannonade opened from their centre. The Dapuri battalion was still about one thousand yards distant from the right of the line, and offered a tempting inducement to a corps of the enemy, who hoped to cut it off while yet detached. Moro Dixit commanded this body of cavalry, and is said to have been excited to undertake so brilliant an enterprise in consequence of some sarcastic remarks made by Gokhle, with reference to his former pursuits and his supposed disposition in favour of the English. As he approached the right flank of the battalion, that wing was promptly thrown back, and when the distance was considered short enough for ample execution, an animated fire was commenced from the battalion and its three field-pieces, which obliged the enemy to desist and continue his movement towards Kirkee. He was here received by the two twelve-pounders which had been placed in position; and, having lost the leader, Moro Dixit, who was shot in the mouth during the attack on the battalion, this

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body of the enemy, discouraged from any further attempt in that quarter, turned towards the rear of the British line.

The Marathas, who had sent on their skirmishers, some of whom had already suffered from the fire of the light infantry, were surprised by this forward movement in troops, whom they had been encouraged to believe were already spiritless; and a damp, which had been spreading over the whole army by the accidental breaking of the staff of the Jari Patka[1] before they left the city, was now much increased. Gokhle, with the true spirit of a soldier, was riding from rank to rank, animating, encouraging and taunting as he thought most effectual; but the Peshwa's heart failed him, and after the troops had advanced he sent a message to Gokhle desiring him 'to be sure not to fire the first gun'. At this moment the British troops were halted, their guns were unlimbering—it was the pause of preparation and of anxiety on both sides; but Gokhle, observing the messenger from the Peshwa and suspecting the nature of his errand, instantly commenced the attack by opening a battery of nine guns, detaching a strong corps of rocket-camels to the right, and pushing forward his cavalry to the right and left. The British troops were soon nearly surrounded by horse; but the Maratha infantry, owing to this rapid advance, were left considerably in the rear, except a regular battalion under a Portuguese, named De Pinto, which had marched by a shorter route, concealed for a time under cover of the enclosures and was now forming with apparent steadiness, immediately in front of the 1st Battalion 7th Regiment, and the grenadiers of the 2nd Battalion 6th. No sooner, however, were their red coats and colours exposed to view of the English sepoys than the latter, with one accord, pushed forward to close, and in their eagerness got detached from the rest of the line. Gokhle, hoping that they might either be disposed to come over or that he might be able to take advantage of their

[1] The national standard of the Marathas.

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impetuosity, prepared a select body of 6,000 horse, which, accompanied by the Jari Patka, and headed by several persons of distinction, had been held in reserve near his left, and were now ordered to charge. The Maratha guns ceased firing to let them pass; and they came down at speed, in a diagonal direction across the British front. Giving their fire, and receiving that of the line, they rode right at the 7th. Lt.-Colonel Burr took his post with the colours of that corps; it had long been his own battalion, he had 'formed and led' it for many years; he was then suffering under a severe and incurable malady, but he showed his wonted coolness and firmness in this moment of peril. He was the first to perceive the moving mass; he had just time to stop the pursuit of De Pinto's battalion, already routed, and to call to the men, who could not be dressed in line, to reserve their fire and prove themselves worthy of all his care. Fortunately, there was a deep slough, of which neither party were aware, immediately in front of the British left. The foremost of the horses rolled over, and many, before they could be pulled up, tumbled over those in front. The fire, hitherto reserved, was now given with great effect, numbers fell, the confusion became extreme, and the force of the charge was completely checked; a very small proportion came in contact with the bayonets, a few continued the attack in the rear, but many turned back; some galloped round the left as if to plunder the camp, but they were driven off by a few shots from two iron guns at Kirkee, and the sepoys had nearly repulsed the attack before a company of Europeans could arrive to their support.

On the junction of Captain Ford's battalion, which formed on the flank at which it arrived, little alteration was made in the previous dispositions. The additional guns from Dapuri being placed on the right flank, those which had formerly occupied that position were moved to the centre. At the same time, the light companies of the 7th Regiment, which had hitherto preceded the line, were sent to the rear to oppose the demonstrations of

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the enemy's horse, who had turned the right flank. Lt.-Colonel Burr again advanced; and, finding his line much galled by numerous skirmishers, who occupied some garden enclosures, and a nullah in his front, he detached all the remaining light infantry to dislodge them: a service which was effected as it became dark.

The enemy had now resumed his original position and was engaged in drawing off his guns towards the city. The British force was in possession of the field of battle; and probably from prudence, as well as want of daylight, considered it inadvisable to persist in a further attack. The troops accordingly marched back to their camp at Kirkee, with the exception of the Dapuri corps, which returned to its isolated cantonments; so well satisfied were the victors that no molestation would be attempted during the night. Lt.-Colonel Burr found, on his return, that Lt.-Colonel Osborne had arrived to relieve him. Having, with that officer's permission, issued his orders of acknowledgements to the troops, he resigned his command.

The Marathas in Captain Ford's battalion deserted, and a part of the newly-raised auxiliary horse were, at their own desire, permitted to quit the British camp; but not one sepoy of the regular service left his colours. The number of the British troops engaged at the affair of Kirkee, including Captain Ford's battalion, was 2,800 rank and file, of whom about 800 were Europeans. Their loss was comparatively trifling, amounting only to 86 men in killed and wounded, 50 of whom were of the sepoys on the left. The Maratha army consisted of 18,000 horse and 8,000 foot, with 14 guns. They suffered considerably, having lost 500 men in killed and wounded; and though the proportion of horses killed on the spot was inconsiderable, a very great number were disabled. Amongst the sufferers was, as we have seen, the Minister Moro Dixit, who, by rather a strange fatality, was mortally wounded by a grapeshot from one of the guns attached to the battalion of his friend, Captain Ford.

So ended the battle of Kirkee; not a great fight,

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perhaps, when compared with the bloody combats of Meeanee or Assaye, but one which proved decisively that the Indian sepoy, disciplined and led by English officers, was more than a match for the finest cavalry in India. It was really the 'baptism of fire' of Napier's Rifles, for after the battle the faithful sepoys of Ford's brigade were formed into two battalions, known as Auxiliary Battalions, which afterwards became the 123rd (Outram's) and 125th (Napier's) Rifles. An extract from a letter from Elphinstone to a friend, written on the battlefield, must close our account of this notable engagement.

'*Camp Kirkee,*
'*November 11, 1817.*

'The Peshwa, who had perhaps been flattered by Gokhle that all his preparations would be made without his getting into a scrape, now saw that he must throw off the mask. Accordingly, he sent a very bullying message to desire I would move the cantonment to such place as he should direct, reduce the strength of the Native Brigade, and send away the Europeans; if I did not comply, peace could not last. I refused, but said I was most anxious for peace, and should not cross the river towards Poona, but if his army came towards ours we should attack it. Within an hour after, out they came with such readiness that we had only time to leave the Sangam with the clothes on our backs, and, crossing the river at a ford under Clieland's,[1] march off to the bridge with the river between us and the enemy, and a little firing but no real fighting. The Sangam, with all the records and all my books, journals, letters, manuscripts, etc., were soon in a blaze, but we got safe to the Kirkee bridge, and soon after joined the line. While the men and followers were fording, we went ourselves to observe the enemy. The sight was magnificent as the tide rolled out of Poona. Grant,[2] who saw it from the height

[1] Clieland commanded the Residency Guard.
[2] Grant Duff, the historian of the Marathas.

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over the powder cave, described it as resembling the Bore in the Gulf of Cambay. Everything was hushed except the trampling and neighing of horses, and the whole valley was filled with them like a river in flood. I had always told Colonel Burr that when war broke out we must recover our character by a forward movement that should encourage and fix our own men, while it checked our enemies, and I now, by a lucky mistake, instead of merely announcing that the Peshwa was at war, sent an order to move down at once and attack him. Without this, Colonel Burr has since told me, he certainly would not have advanced. However, he did advance, we joined, and, after some unavoidable delay, the Dapuri battalion joined too. When opposite to the nullah, where there used to be a plantain garden, we (injudiciously, I think) halted to cannonade, and at the same moment the enemy began from twelve or fifteen guns. Soon after his whole mass of cavalry came on at speed in the most splendid style. The rush of horse, the sound of the earth, the waving of flags, the brandishing of spears, were grand beyond description, but perfectly ineffectual. One great body, however, Gokhle and Moro Dixit and some others, formed on our left and rear, and when the 1st-7th was drawn off by its ardour to attack Major Pinto, who appeared on our left, and was quite separated from the European regiment, this body charged with great vigour and broke through between it and the European regiment. At this time, the rest of the line was pretty well occupied with shot, matchlocks, and above all with rockets, and I own I thought there was a good chance of our losing the battle. The 1st-7th, however, though it had expended all its ammunition, survived the charge and was brought back to the line by Colonel Burr, who showed infinite coolness and courage; and after some more firing, and some advancing, together with detaching a few companies to our right towards the little hill of Ganeshkind, we found ourselves alone in the field and the sun long set. I was at first for advancing to the water at the

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Sait's Garden, but was persuaded it was better to return to camp, which it was. If we had not made the move forward, the Peshwa's troops would have been quite bold, ours quite cowed, and we doubtful of their fidelity. We should have been cannonaded and rocketed in our camp, and the horse would have been careering within our pickets. As it is, the Peshwa's army has been glad to get safe behind Poona, and we have been almost as quiet as if encamped on the Retee at Delhi.'[1]

As soon as General Smith found the communication cut off, he advanced on Poona (November 13th). From the time his division quitted Sirur, he was followed by a flying party of Marathas, who, owing to his want of cavalry, harassed his march. He arrived on the evening of the 13th, and preparations were made to attack the Peshwa before daylight of the 15th. His army, having obtained a considerable addition by the junction of most of the southern *jaghirdars*, had come out a few days before and encamped with its left on the late cantonment of the British troops, and its right stretching along the Hyderabad road for several miles. The intended attack, however, on the morning of the 15th, was postponed by General Smith in consequence of unforeseen difficulties at the ford. About sunset on the evening of the 16th an advanced brigade was ordered to cross the ford, and take up a position to the east of the Peshwa's army at the village of Ghorpuri, for the purpose of co-operating in an intended attack on the ensuing morning; it was opposed by a body of the Peshwa's infantry, supported by parties of horse and two guns; but having succeeded in getting to its station, though with the loss of 84 men in killed and wounded, it was no longer molested during the night. In the morning, when General Smith moved towards the camp, he found it abandoned, and that the Peshwa had fled towards Satara. During the day the city was surrendered and, the greatest care being taken on

[1] Colebrooke, *Life*, i, 382. Forrest, *Selections*, p. 48.

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this, as on every occasion, by General Smith for the protection of the peaceable part of the community, order and tranquillity were soon re-established. General Smith remained at Poona for five days, during which time communication with Bombay was opened, and a party, being detached for the purpose, succeeded in capturing several guns in the neighbourhood of the fort of Singarh.

During the operations which immediately followed, an event took place which is proudly remembered in the annals of the Indian army. A flying column, consisting of 500 men of the 2nd Battalion 1st Bombay N.I., 300 irregular horse and two guns, was ordered to move from Sirur to Poona. At the little village of Koregaon, about half-way to Poona, on New Year's Day, 1818, this tiny force ran full into the arms of the Peshwa's army. They had barely time to seize the village, when they were attacked in force. Hand-to-hand fighting of the most bloodthirsty character went on until 9 at night, when the Peshwa's army drew off. How severe had been the combat is shown by the casualty list, 271 killed and wounded out of 825. For its gallant conduct, the 2/1st N.I. was made a grenadier regiment, and bears 'Koregaon', the earliest of its battle honours, upon its colours.

The Peshwa was now in full flight, doubling like a hare among the fastnesses of the Deccan. On February 20th, 1818, the Maratha cavalry was decisively defeated by the British horse at Ashti in the Sholapur district, where the gallant Gokhle found a soldier's death. The famous Maratha hill-forts, once deemed impregnable, offered only a feeble resistance to the high-angle fire of the English howitzers. In these 'mopping up' operations, our regiment, which, after the battle of Kirkee had been formed as an Auxiliary Battalion, took a prominent part. On June 3rd, 1818, the Peshwa surrendered, but it was some time before peace was restored throughout the Deccan. By a General Order, May 24th, 1820, the regiment was changed into an Extra Battalion, and stationed at Sirur. From Sirur, it

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moved to the old cantonment of Surat, the cradle of British rule in India, in the following year, where, on January 11th, 1822, it was inspected by General Cooke, commanding the Surat Division, who expressed his satisfaction with its state of discipline, field exercises and movements. It is noteworthy that at the time of its inspection, the battalion only possessed a single British officer—its Adjutant, Lieut. Belassis! Casualties from sickness in those days were heavy: Captain Belts, the original Commandant, appointed in May, 1820, died in July, 1821; his successor, Captain Danbery, died the following October. Captain Edsall took command in January, 1822, and in February of the following year the inspecting officer notes with approval their soldier-like appearance and the correctness of their firings and movements, which, under the want of European officers of companies, did just credit to the zeal and abilities of Captain Edsall.

In 1824 the battalion was stationed at Dapoli, and took the field as part of the force sent to put down an insurrection which had broken out at Kittur. Kittur is an ancient and picturesque fort on the road between Dharwar and Belgaum, in the Southern Maratha country. The Desais of Kittur had been the friends of the British Raj for many generations, and had helped them in the war against the Peshwa. But in September, 1824, the old Sardar, Shivlinga Rudra, died, and an attempt was made to foist upon Government a child whom he was said to have adopted. Mr. Thackeray, the Collector of Dharwar, on proceeding to the spot to investigate, was shot dead, and his two assistants were made prisoners. The fortress was held by a force of 5,000 desperadoes, mostly retainers of the old Desai, and it was not until it had been regularly invested, and the walls breached by gunfire, that the occupants surrendered at discretion. These operations lasted from November 21st, 1824, to January 19th, 1825. In 1826, the 1st Extra Battalion volunteered for active service overseas against the Burmese, for which it received the

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thanks of the Commander-in-Chief, though it was not actually called upon to take part in the campaign. The significance of this action should not be missed. The Bengal regiments objected to overseas service, and only those who enlisted for general service, or volunteered, could be sent. To volunteer was, therefore, an act of some distinction.

On September 16th of that year, an important event in the history of the regiment occurred. The 1st and 2nd Extra Battalions were converted into Regiments of the Line, and our battalion was ordered to be entitled THE 25TH REGIMENT NATIVE INFANTRY. For the first time in its history, it was given its full complement of British officers. The cadre was as follows:

Lt.-Colonel Taylor
Major J. Brown
Captain P. W. Pedlar
„ A. Grafton
„ J. Hancock
„ J. B. Seely
„ T. Marshall
Lieutenant B. Macmahon
„ H. Spencer
„ H. C. Teasdale
„ H. Hopkins
„ G. Macan
Lieutenant H. Stevenson
„ A. Woodburn
„ A. Orr
„ J. Mant
„ G. Tollemache
Ensign G. Clarkson
„ H. H. Doherty
„ F. D. Bagshawe
„ G. D. Wilson
„ G. Fulljames
„ J. R. F. Willoughby

The regiment had now to say good-bye to its old Commandant, Captain Edsall, and the G.O.C. Division was pleased to record in orders the efficient state in which it had been delivered over to his charge.

Thus the 25th N.I. came into being on the day on which the great Maratha Empire received its death-blow. By its loyalty to its British officers in circumstances of great trial and temptation—a loyalty which it was destined to re-affirm under infinitely greater stress half a century later—it had taken its place in the line. For the next fourteen years it was occupied in the ordinary routine duties of a line regiment of the Bombay Army. In 1827, it was split up into small detachments and occupied in putting down a minor revolt among the

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Ramoshis, a troublesome and restless tribe of aboriginal hillmen, round Purandhar, the military sanitarium some sixteen miles from Poona. After this, we find it at Poona, Satara, Dapoli, and other cantonments of the Western Presidency. But sterner duties awaited it, and in December, 1839, it marched down to Bombay, in readiness to embark on active service in Sind.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER I

The chief authorities are *Pendhari and Mahratta War Papers* (1824), containing original despatches and correspondence; *Memoir of the Operations . . . during the Mahratta War of 1817, 1818, and 1819*, by Lt.-Colonel V. Blacker, Q.M.G. to the Army of the Deccan (London, 1821); *A History of the Mahrattas*, by J. Grant Duff, Ed. Edwardes, (London, 1922); *Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone*, by Sir T. E. Colebrooke, (London, 1884); *Selections from the Minutes . . . of Mountstuart Elphinstone*, by Sir G. W. Forrest (London, 1884); regimental records, and unpublished papers in the Poona Residency records. The latter include a holograph despatch from Lt.-Colonel Burr, written on the evening of the battle. Grant Duff and Mountstuart Elphinstone were both eyewitnesses. *A History of the British Army*, by the Hon. J. W. Fortescue, vol. xi, chaps. vii–xi, is the best modern account of the campaign.

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THE CONQUEST OF SIND

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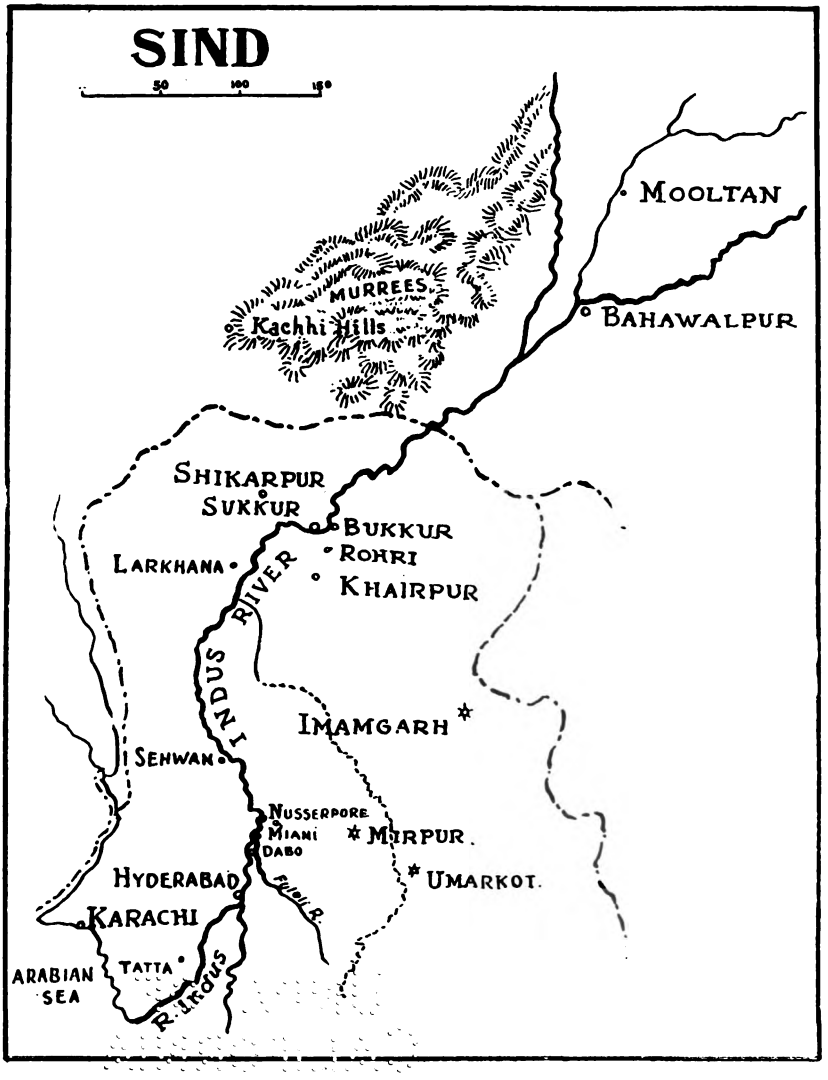

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CHAPTER II

THE CONQUEST OF SIND

FORTUNATELY, we are not called upon to enter here into the vexed question of the justification for our conquest of Sind, which aroused such a storm of controversy at the time. The Talpur Mirs were a confederacy of Baluchi chiefs, each ruling his portion of the country independently. Though brave and chivalrous, they really deserved very little of the sympathy showered upon them. Themselves alien invaders, who had only recently (1783) seized the reins of government by force, they showed little mercy to the vast population over whom they ruled. The countryside was ruined to form vast *shikargahs*, or preserves, and the wretched peasants, at the risk of life and limb, had to drive the big game in front of the *machans* of their rulers. With cruel intolerance, they subjected the Hindus to every kind of indignity, until the majority were either compelled to flee the country or to adopt the religion of their rulers. It is not to be wondered that the latter received us with open arms. 'We have no right to seize Sind,' writes Sir Charles Napier, in his sardonic way. 'Yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be.'[1] The government of the Mirs was feudal in character. Most of the land was given in *jaghir* to the chiefs, each of whom in return was bound to furnish a quota of troops. By this means the Mirs could mobilize at need about 50,000 men, armed with the *talwar*, or Indian sabre, and the long matchlock or *jizail*. Excellent marksmen and horsemen, and perhaps the finest swordsmen in the world, they were brave to a fault, but lacking in discipline and cohesion. The

[1] 'Peccavi,' of course, was *Punch's* joke, though it chimes in exactly with Napier's caustic wit.

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Mirs had little power over their turbulent and haughty feudatories, and as they only possessed a small standing army of household troops, they could do nothing to keep them in check. Moreover, as they had to pay a foot-soldier two annas and a *sowar* four annas a day when mobilized, they disbanded them as soon as possible. The Mirs were an anachronism, bound to disappear sooner or later; and the conquest of Sind, besides delivering the indigenous population from their oppressors, gave the British a stronger and shorter western frontier, the command of the Indus, with innumerable commercial and strategic benefits, and direct and easy communication with central Asia and the Panjab.

For a long time, the Indus was jealously closed to English travellers. At last, in 1831, Lieut. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Burnes obtained permission to ascend it, on the pretext of presenting to Ranjit Singh a present of horses from the King of England. 'Alas!' cried a by-stander prophetically, 'Sind is now gone. *The English have seen the river!*' He was right. Burnes made a treaty with the Mir of Khairpur, allowing the Company to use the Indus for trade, but not for military purposes. Four years later, Lord Auckland demanded permission for the passage of troops through Sind, and for the transport of military stores up the river. These demands, constituting as they did a threat to their independence, at once aroused the suspicions of the Mirs. Matters drifted from bad to worse. In 1838, the Governor-General, apprehensive of the advance of Russia in central Asia, executed the famous 'Tripartite Treaty' with Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Panjab, and Shah Shuja, the Amir of Afghanistan, who had been deposed by his rival, Sher Mahommed. The main object of the treaty was the re-establishment of Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. For this purpose, the so-called army of the Indus was mobilized and it was arranged that the Bombay contingent, under Sir John Keane, was to join the Bengal troops at Quetta. It was, unfortunately, deemed necessary again to suspend the 1832 agreement, and

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Shikarpur, Bukkar, and other strategic points were occupied. This caused renewed uneasiness and discontent among the Baluchi chiefs, who were sullen and suspicious and awaited the next move on the part of the British with growing resentment.

We must now return to the 25th. In August, 1840, they were under orders for active service. The first detachment sailed, on the 10th of that month, for Karachi, and the whole regiment followed on September 7th. On October 10th, Lt.-Colonel Marshall having been promoted to the command of Upper Sind, Captain Teasdale, who had joined the 25th in 1826, and was destined to find a soldier's death with the colours at Meeanee, took charge of it. The battalion now became part of the force guarding the line of communications west of the Indus, under General Brooks, and was sent, via Larkhana, to Kotra in Baluchistan, where they arrived on October 27th. A month after they had their first brush with the enemy. A body of Brahuis, about 2,000 strong, under Nasir Khan, son of the late Khan of Khelat, was threatening our line of communications, and on November 28th, Colonel Marshall was ordered to march out with the 25th and detachments of the 2nd and 21st—about 900 bayonets and two guns in all—to disperse them. The Baluchis were attacked and routed, with a loss of over 400 killed and 132 prisoners. In this brilliant little action, the 25th, under Captain Teasdale, executed a highly successful turning movement, which was largely instrumental in determining the fortunes of the day. Their losses, 41 killed and wounded, were extremely light in view of the success achieved; but among the former was Lieut. Lodge of the 25th. For this feat of arms, in which the 25th received their baptism of fire, the force was publicly thanked in orders by Major-General Brooks. After this, the battalion marched over the Bolan Pass to Quetta, where it joined General England's brigade. With the details of the disastrous Afghan campaign, culminating as it did, in the winter of 1841–2, with the greatest disaster which ever befell the Indian

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army before Kut-el-Amara—the annihilation of Elphinstone's force in the snows of the Afghan mountain passes—we are, fortunately, not concerned. Meanwhile, Sir Robert Sale was holding out stoutly at Jalalabad, and Nott at Kandahar. In March, 1842, General England marched out with his brigade to the relief of Kandahar, which he reached on May 10th. *En route* for that city, the 25th were in action with the enemy at Haikalzai in the Pishin valley. After taking part in the defence of Kandahar until its evacuation in August, General England marched back to Quetta, crossing on his way the formidable Khojak Pass, fortunately without loss. For a short time the 25th found themselves again under the command of Lt.-Colonel Marshall, but when he went on sick leave, in December, Major Teasdale (who had, shortly before, obtained his majority) again replaced him.

Lord Ellenborough considered that our prestige had been sufficiently retrieved, and our former disasters and humiliations avenged, by the destruction of Ghazni and the sack of Kabul. He, therefore, determined to turn his attention to Sind. The Sind campaign has been aptly described as 'the tail of the Afghan storm'. During the Afghan War, the attitude of the Mirs was one of sullen hostility, but they were too cowed openly to join the Afghans and they were kept in order by Major Outram, our Resident at Hyderabad, who was universally loved and respected. In 1842, however, the Governor-General decided to put Sind under the rule of General Sir Charles Napier, and to withdraw all civil and political officers.

Napier was born in 1782, of a distinguished fighting family.[1] He passed his youth in Ireland, among the

[1] His father was Colonel the Hon. George Napier, descended from Montrose and the inventor of logarithms; his mother was the beautiful and famous Lady Sarah Lennox. He had four brothers: George, afterwards General Sir George, Governor of the Cape; William, the historian of Sind and the Peninsula; Richard (Q.C.); and Henry, Captain, R.N. A cousin and contemporary, Admiral Sir Charles Napier, also had a distinguished career.

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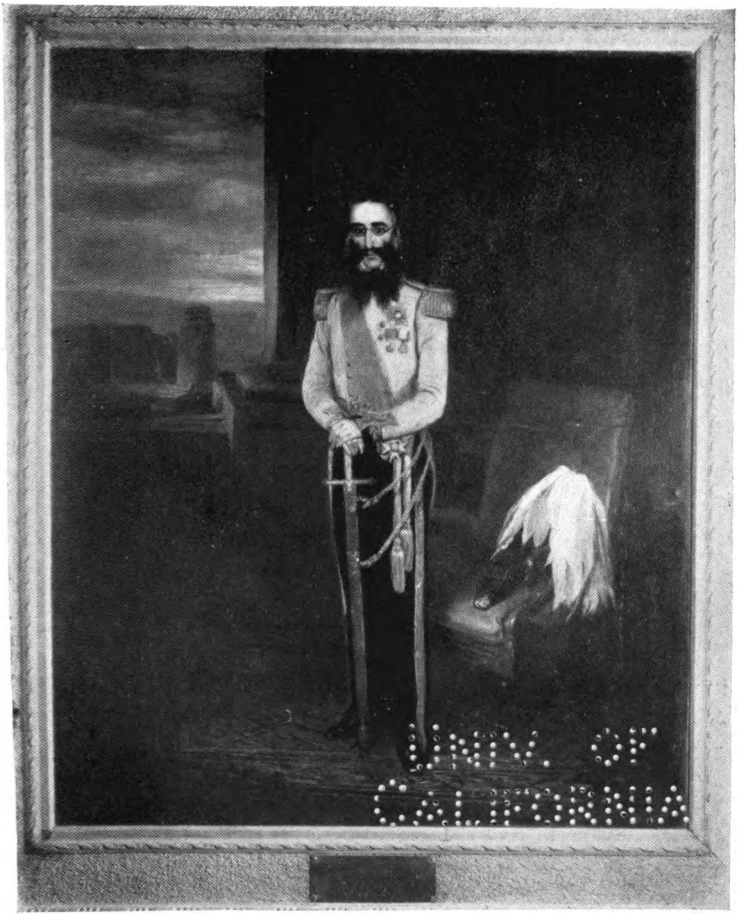

SIR CHARLES NAPIER G.C.B.

THIS PORTRAIT WAS PRESENTED TO THE 25TH BOMBAY N.I.
BY LIEUT. GEN. SIR CHARLES NAPIER G.C.B.
"AS A MEMENTO OF THEIR INTREPIDITY AT THE BATTLE OF MIANI
AND WITH THE REFLECTION THAT HIS NAME
WILL BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE 25TH REGT N.I.
WHEN THOSE THAT SURVIVED THE CONQUEST OF SIND
SHALL BE GATHERED TO THEIR COMRADES —
WHO FELL IN BATTLE."

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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stormy scenes of violence and rapine which racked that unhappy country at the close of the eighteenth century. Receiving a commission in the Rifle Corps in 1800, he saw service under Sir John Moore in Portugal. He was present at Corunna, Busaco, Fuentes D'Onoro and Badajos, and was six times wounded, twice by bullets in the cheek and jaw, which marked him for life. It was characteristic of the family invariably to find themselves where the fighting was hottest. All three brothers, together with their cousin, had quickly found their way to the Peninsula, and it is related that on one occasion, Charles, his jaw still bound up, had escaped from hospital and was pushing on towards the firing line, when he met a stretcher party. 'What officer is that?' 'Captain Napier, 52nd, Sir; broken limb.'[1] He met a second. 'Who is that?' 'Captain Napier, 43rd, Sir; mortally wounded.'[2] This illustrates the spirit of the 'fighting Napiers'. On the battlefield, his very appearance was sufficient to scare the superstitious Baluchis, and for this reason, perhaps, he bore a charmed life, for his natural impetuosity landed him more than once in positions of imminent peril. And a strange spectacle he must have made, with his small, wasted figure, his jaw, disabled by his old wound, working convulsively, his enormous hooked nose, his horn-rimmed spectacles, an extraordinary headgear of his own invention, and his long beard and whiskers, which reached below his belt, streaming in the wind. Riding up at full gallop on Red Rover, the faithful Arab charger who shared the perils and discomforts of his Sind campaign,[3] he was always at hand, with his 'blasphemous exhortations', which startled even the hardened veterans of the old Company's army, to put fresh heart into a wavering line at the critical

[1] George, afterwards General Sir George Napier.

[2] Fortunately, this was incorrect. Sir William lived many years, surviving his brother, whose life he wrote.

[3] He took Red Rover home with him, and the old charger was brought to his master's deathbed for a last farewell. (*Illustrated London News*, Sept. 17th, 1853.)

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moment. In spite of his appalling language and his iron discipline, Napier loved his men and was loved by them; he did much to mitigate their hardships, especially in the matter of barracks, and the 22nd[1] in particular regarded him as an Irishman and a brother, and would follow him anywhere. 'When I see that old man incessantly on his horse,' said a subaltern, speaking of 'Old Fagin' (the name by which Napier was popularly known in regimental messes), 'how can I be idle? By God! I would go into a loaded cannon's mouth if he ordered me.' When he landed in Bombay, he was nearly sixty years old, had not saved a penny, and knew nothing of India, its language or its customs. In a hard-drinking age, he was a total abstainer and a non-smoker, and he probably owed his life, during the Sind hot weather, to his temperate habits. Gifted with a fiery tongue and an almost equally fiery pen, he brooked no opposition from high or low; he treated with supreme contempt all diplomatic red-tape, and expressed in unprintable language his opinion of the 'politicals' to whom, not without reason, he ascribed our disasters in Afghanistan. He was not a great tactician; like his contemporary, Sir Hugh Gough, he thought of little but annihilating his enemy by an overwhelming frontal attack; but he had learnt the value of Wellington's excellent maxim, 'When you see an Asiatic army, go for it.' Napier arrived in Karachi on September 9th, 1842. His available forces in Sind consisted of one European regiment, the 22nd, the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, the 12th and 25th Bombay Infantry, the Madras Sappers and Miners, the Sind Horse under Jacob, the Poona Horse, and the 9th Bengal Cavalry, totalling about 2,000 bayonets, and 800 sabres, together with twelve guns drawn by camels. Many of the men were young soldiers, and their *morale* had been badly shaken by the Afghan disasters and loss of prestige, the reputation of the Baluchi as a swordsman, and the reputed superiority of

[1] Now the 1st Bn., The Cheshire Regiment.

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the *jizail* over the musket. But nothing deterred Napier. He shrewdly saw that if he were compelled to fight, he must do so before the hot weather set in, and he strongly suspected that the Mirs were protracting negotiations for a similar object. He determined, therefore, to strike at once.

Soon after his arrival at Sind, he sent 'an austere but timely warning' to the Mirs, and in order to impress upon their minds that 'neither the deserts nor their negotiations could intercept the progress of the British army', and, to strike terror into their hearts, he sent a small expedition to cross the desert and seize the Imamgarh, a famous desert fortress, sometimes styled 'the Gibraltar of the East', where the Mirs kept their treasure. This dramatic coup was carried out in a brilliantly successful fashion. He then espoused the cause of Ali Murad, who alleged, with very little cause, that he had been defrauded of his chieftainship by Mir Rustam; Ali Murad was very unpopular with the Baluchis, who looked upon this piece of interference on the part of Napier as unwarranted. The word went round Sind, 'The General is bent on war. Be ready.' The feudal chiefs began to mobilize their followers, and everywhere the tribesmen were arming. Lastly, Napier ordered Outram to present to the Mirs a drastic treaty, which included the cession of Karachi, Tatta, Sukkur, Bukkur and Rohri to the British. Outram, in a last despairing effort to avert war, induced the unfortunate princes to sign this fresh imposition, but the very act had the opposite effect: it fired the mine. A mob of infuriated Baluchis, exasperated beyond control, attacked the Hyderabad Residency, and Outram and his staff, after a gallant defence for four hours, managed to slip down to the river and escape on steamers, which had been sent by Napier in case of an emergency.

The sword was now drawn. Napier was encamped at Halla, about thirty miles up the river, when he heard the news. He determined to move at once upon the capital. His little force of 2,800 men broke camp at Matari at

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about 2 a.m. on the night of February 16th. Progress, over ground intersected by nullahs, was very slow, and about 7 a.m., when they had covered only half the distance, Jacob rode in to say that the enemy, about 30,000 strong with 5,000 cavalry, were occupying the bed of the Fuleli river, a tributary of the Indus, directly barring their advance. The general at once rode out to reconnoitre, but the Baluchi guns made it impossible for him to approach close enough to observe an important fact, viz. that the precipitous bank of the river itself was held in strength, and sheltered the main forces of the enemy, who were waiting there under cover to receive the advancing line.

'Their infantry were very skilfully and strongly posted. Their front was upon a development of twelve hundred yards, lining the deep nullah or dry bed of the Fuleli, whose high bank, sloping towards the open plain in front, furnished a strong rampart. In front of this bank their guns were placed in two masses covering the flanks; and they were now pouring shot on the British, as the latter formed their line within range.

'The wings of the Baluch army rested on large *shikargahs*,[1] which extended on each side of the plain in front for a considerable way, so as to flank the British line on both sides when it should advance. These woods were very large, and very dense with jungle and trees. That on the Baluch right was intersected by several minor nullahs of different sizes, but all very deep, and running nearly at right-angles with the Fuleli; and that great nullah took a sudden bend to the rear, behind the *shikargah*, forming a deep loop in which the Mirs' camp and the cavalry were placed. The minor nullahs were all carefully scarped, and rendered impassable for guns and cavalry; and several detachments of matchlock men were posted behind them.

'The *shikargah* on the enemy's left was very exten-

[1] An enclosed hunting-park. See p. 25 *supra*

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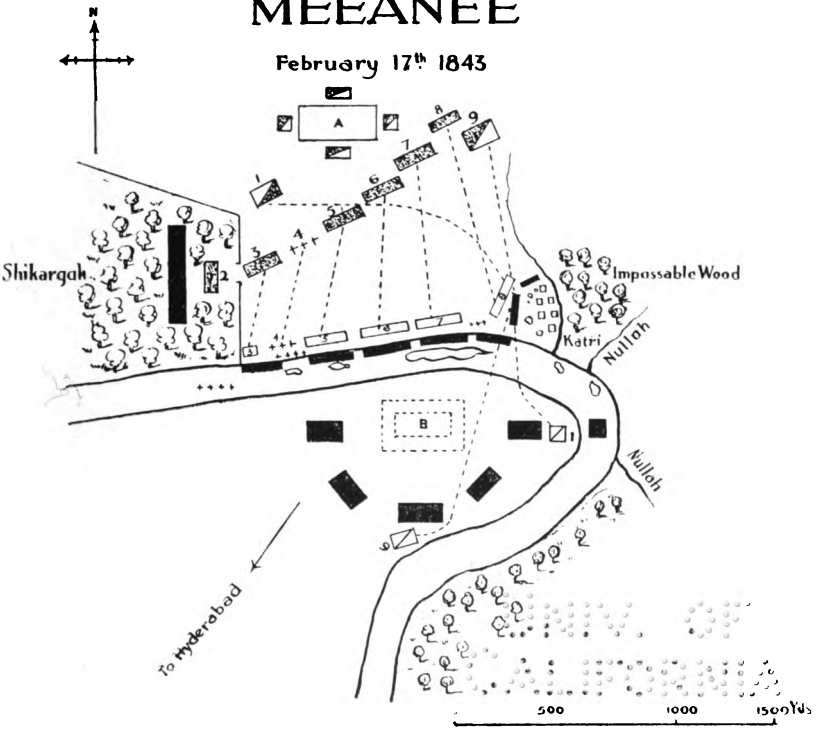
BATTLE of MEEANEE

February 17th 1843



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sive, and, though free from nullahs, furnished an equally strong flank. It was enclosed towards the plain with a wall, having one opening, not very wide, about midway between the Baluch position and the British line of battle; there were five or six thousand infantry posted in it, evidently with the design of rushing out, through the opening, on the flank and rear of the troops when they should advance to the attack.

'The General judged that to attempt forcing a way through the large *shikargah* on the Baluch right, and so assail that flank, would be a fruitless effort; to turn it by a wide movement would waste the day; moreover, in consequence of the bend, he could only bring the army on to the Fuleli again, where it offered as good a defensive position.

'To turn the *shikargah* protecting the Baluch left would have cost still more time; it would have been even more difficult; and, when effected, the Fuleli was still to be passed in face of the enemy, and having the Baluchis in the *shikargah* on the flank and rear. But the Fuleli on that side was not dry, there was water, and a bottom of deep mud; to cross such an obstacle, and by a flank march, would have been dangerous; bridges also must have been made, and the day wasted. The time thus lost would have brought 25,000 more Baluchis into position; moreover, delay in the presence of such overwhelming numbers might break down the confidence of the soldiers, none of whom the General had proved in danger.

'To fall on hardily by the front remained. But 35,000 Baluchis were there, and the British army, including officers, was, by the detachment under Outram, reduced to less than twenty-four hundred.[1] From this number a strong baggage guard was to be taken, lest an

[1] Outram, with 200 sepoys, had gone downstream to burn certain *shikargahs* affording cover on the banks on the previous night. This procedure, bitterly criticized in the *Conquest of Scinde*, was most effective. It drove the Baluchi out into the open. And the men employed were convalescents, unfit for serious fighting.

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enemy's detachment should, during the battle, strike at that immense mass of camp followers and animals, near which the fighting men appeared, as indeed they were, but a handful. There was no village with walls near in which to place the baggage; but, with a happy adaptation of the ancient German method, the General cast this enormous mass into a circle, close behind his line of battle; then, surrounding it with the camels, who were made to lie down having their heads inward, he placed the bales between them as ramparts for the armed followers to fire over; thus forming a species of fortress not easily stormed if bravely defended. Assigning the Poona Horse, under Captain Tait, about two hundred and fifty strong, and four companies of infantry as a guard, he proceeded to form his order of battle with the rest of the troops, now reduced to less than two thousand of all arms, officers included; the sabres and bayonets were only seventeen hundred and eighty. Twelve guns, under Major Lloyd, flanked by fifty Madras Sappers and Miners, under Captain Henderson, were on the right. On the left of the artillery marched the 22nd Queen's Regiment, under Colonel Pennefather. This battalion, about five hundred in number, was composed entirely of Irishmen. To the left of the 22nd stood the swarthy sepoys of Bombay, small men and generally of low caste, but hardy, brave and willing; as good in fire, and more docile out of it, than the soldiers of the higher castes, having fewer prejudices and less pride. First of these were the 25th Regiment, under Major Teasdale; they moved next to the 22nd, but somewhat behind the line, for in the 'echelon' order of battle the General had determined to attack. To their left were the 12th Regiment, under Major Reid. Then came the 1st Grenadiers, under Major Clibborn. Closing the extreme left of the line, yet somewhat to the rear, rode the 9th Bengal Cavalry, under Colonel Pattle. In front of the right some infantry skirmishers were thrown out. Covering the left were the Sind irregular horsemen, led by Captain Jacob. These Sind irregulars on

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the left, and the flank companies of the 22nd on the right, were at first pushed forward on the plain, to make the Baluchis show their position and numbers; for it was the habit of those warriors to ensconce themselves in holes and nullahs, waiting the approach of their foe. They remain thus with matchlocks resting on the edge of their cover, and fire until the mark is close; then, throwing down the discharged weapon, they leap out with sword and shield, and strong and courageous must the man be who stands before them and lives.

'The plain between the two armies was about a thousand yards over. For seven hundred yards it was covered with low jungle bushes, which impeded the march of the line; but the rest had been cleared by the Baluchis up to the bank of the Fuleli, to give the better play to their matchlocks. They fired long shots now and then at the skirmishers and cavalry, but still lay close and hidden in the nullahs and in the *shikargah*.

'When the line was formed the General gave the signal to advance, and rode forward himself with his staff, and his interpreter, Ali Akbar, an Arab gentleman of high race and true Arab courage, who had never left his chief's side in any danger. Constant and heavy was the fire from the Baluch guns, and though few men could be discovered, the rapid play of the matchlocks indicated the presence of numbers, and marked the position.

'The Mirs' right was found to be strengthened and covered by the village of Katri, which was filled with men; that flank offered no weak point. But in the *shikargah* on their left the General instantly detected a flaw. It has been before said this *shikargah* was covered by a wall, having only one opening, not very wide, through which it was evident the Baluchis meant to pour out on the flank and rear of the advancing British line. The General rode near this wall and found it was nine or ten feet high; he rode nearer and marked it had no loopholes for the enemy to shoot through; he rode into the opening under a play of matchlocks, and, looking behind the wall, saw there was no scaffolding to enable

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the Baluchis to fire over the top. Taking the grenadiers of the 22nd, he thrust them at once into the opening, telling Captain Tew that he was to block up that entrance; to die there if it must be, never to give way. And well did that gallant officer obey his orders; he died there, but the opening was defended. The great disparity of numbers was thus abated, and the action of six thousand men paralyzed by the more skilful action of only eighty.

'Now the advancing troops, formed in columns of regiments, approached the enemy's front. The British right passed securely under the wall of the *shikargah*, cheered and elated as they moved by the rattling sound of Tew's musketry; the left was somewhat refused, to avoid the fire from the village of Katri, which it was designed Clibborn should storm with his sepoy grenadiers. Meanwhile the dead level of the plain was swept by the Baluch cannon and matchlocks, which were answered from time to time by Lloyd's battery, yet not frequently, for rapidly and eagerly did the troops press forward to close with their unseen foes. When the 22nd had got within a hundred yards of the high sloping bank of the Fuleli, the columns opened line to their left; and as the companies formed in succession, they threw their fire at the top of the bank, where the heads of the Baluchs could be just seen, bending with fiery glances over the levelled matchlocks. The formation was still incomplete when the voice of the General, shrill and clear, was heard along the line commanding the charge.

'Then rose the British shout, the English guns were run forward into position, the infantry closed upon the Fuleli with a run, and rushed up the sloping bank. The Baluchis, having their matchlocks laid ready in rest along the summit, waited until the assailants were within fifteen yards ere their volley was delivered; the rapid pace of the British, and the steepness of the slope on the inside deceived their aim, and the execution was not great; the next moment the 22nd were on the top of the bank, thinking to bear down all before them, but they staggered back in amazement at the forest of swords waving in their

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front! Thick as standing corn, and gorgeous as a field of flowers, stood the Baluchis in their many-coloured garments and turbans; they filled the broad deep bed of the Fuleli, they clustered on both banks, and covered the plain beyond. Guarding their heads with their large dark shields, they shook their sharp swords, beaming in the sun, their shouts rolled like a peal of thunder, as with frantic gestures they rushed forward, and full against the front of the 22nd dashed with demoniac strength and ferocity. But with shouts as loud, and shrieks as wild and fierce as theirs, and hearts as big and arms as strong, the Irish soldiers met them with the musket, and sent their foremost masses rolling back in blood.

'During this time the small band of sappers on the right fought gallantly, and protected that flank of the artillery, which from its position swept diagonally along the bed of the Fuleli, tearing the masses with a horrible carnage. The sepoys, Clibborn's grenadiers excepted, who were engaged in a skirmish at the village of Katri, soon came into action by regiments, in succession, and they were met in the same terrible manner by the enemy; but, with undaunted courage, sustained the shock.

'Now the Baluchis closed their dense masses, and again the shouts and the rolling fire of musketry and the dreadful rush of the swordsmen were heard and seen along the whole line, and such a fight ensued as has seldom been known, or told of, in the records of war. Forever those wild warriors came close up, sword and shield in advance, striving, in all the fierceness of their valour, to break into the opposing ranks; no fire of small arms, no push of bayonets, no sweeping discharges of grape from the guns, which were planted in one mass on the right, could drive the gallant fellows back; they gave their breasts to the shot, they leaped upon the guns and were blown away by twenties at a time; their dead went down the steep slope by hundreds; but the gaps in their masses were continually filled up from the rear, the survivors of the front rank still pressed forward

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with unabated fury, and the bayonet and the sword clashed in full and frequent conflict.'[1]

'At this point,' says Major-General Marston, relating his experiences many years afterwards, 'Sir Charles Napier rode through the ranks of the 22nd, and standing in front of the regiment, called on the line to advance,[2] and at the same time the enemy came over the bank all down the line. In answer to Sir Charles Napier's call, the European officers all went to the front. I happened to have my eye on Colonel Pennefather, commanding the 22nd, and I almost saw the bullet strike him in the chest, and he was taken away behind the regiment. Well, Major Teasdale, of my regiment, a gallant man, rushed through the ranks and was followed by two havildars, and they were all killed;[3] the enemy jumped up and cut them down. Major Jackson, of the 12th Native Infantry, died in exactly the same manner, and in this way the fight went on, Sir Charles still being in front. . . .'[4]

'Nearly all the European officers were now slain or wounded, and several times the sepoys, wanting leaders, slowly receded; but the General, a skilful horseman and conspicuous from his peculiar headgear, half helmet, half turban, was always at the point of greatest pressure, and then manfully the swarthy soldiers recovered the lost

[1] *Conquest of Scinde*, by Sir William Napier (1845), pp. 305 ff.,

[2] He was nearly shot by his own men while doing so!—Fortescue, p. 290. See the reminiscences of this part of the battle, by General McMurdo, of the 22nd, quoted in the *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, by W. Napier Bruce (1885), pp. 203-4.

[3] 'Animating his sepoys, he rode violently over the ridge into the midst of the Baluchs, and was instantly killed by shot and sabre, dying with glorious devotion.' *Conquest of Scinde*, loc. cit. 'The conduct of Major Teasdale ere he fell was glorious, beyond that of any man I ever saw die; for an instant I forgot the battle, and looked at him with admiration,' wrote Napier. The names of the two heroic havildars were Bekam Tivari and Lakshman Jadhav. They deserve to be rescued from oblivion.

[4] *Sind Gazette*, February 22nd, 1893.

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ground. Once he was assailed by a chief, but on the instant Lieutenant Marston, of the 25th Native Regiment, was at his side, and slew the sirdar, whose tomb has been raised by his tribe since, on the spot where he fell. At another period of the fight he was alone for several minutes, in the midst of the enemy; they stalked around him with raised shields and scowling eyes; but, whether from some appearance affecting their minds—for the Baluchis are very superstitious—or from some other cause, none lifted sword against him, and he returned to his own people unhurt. The 22nd soldiers, seeing him thus emerge from a crowd of foes, called to him by name, and gave him a cheer heard distinctly above the general din of the battle!

'Three hours and a half this storm of war continued without abatement, and still the Baluchis, undismayed at their losses, pressed onwards with furious force, their number seeming to augment instead of decreasing; and that the British troops were not trampled underfoot is to be attributed principally to their rapid firing. They tumbled down their foremost enemies so thickly, as they ascended the steep bank on the top of which they were always met, that the survivors, however strong and active, could not get clear of the carcases before the muskets were ready to deal death again; the bayonet sufficed for those who passed the shot unharmed.

'During all this time the grenadiers of the 22nd maintained their post at the opening in the wall of the *shikargah*; they even advanced until their gallant captain fell, and always manfully secured the right flank and rear of their regiment, then fighting on the Fuleli. But on the left flank, Major Clibborn, instead of storming the village of Katri as was designed, kept his sepoy grenadiers, who could hardly be restrained from closer fight, in a position where they were but slightly engaged.

'Such was the state of the field at the end of three hours, when that inevitable crisis, belonging to every battle, which offers victory to the commander who most

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promptly and strongly seizes the occasion, arrived at Meeanee. Sir Charles Napier was that commander. He saw Clibborn's error on the left, he was hardly pressed on the right himself, and he had no reserve save his cavalry, the action of which was paralyzed by the village of Katri. Yet the battle must be lost or won within twenty minutes! Already Jacob had endeavoured to make way through the *shikargah* on his left, with the Sind horsemen, hoping thus to turn the village and get on the flank of the Baluchis' position; but the frequent scarped nullahs, the thick jungle, and the appearance of matchlock men soon convinced him it was not to be done, and he returned. The General could not quit the right, so thick and heavily the Baluchis pressed on, so stern and dreadful was their fighting, so wearied and exhausted were his men; but his eye covered the whole field, and on the left he saw victory beckoning to him, though Clibborn was unconscious of her presence. Wherefore, urging his men, by his voice and example, firmly to sustain the increasing fury of the Baluchis, he sent orders to Colonel Pattle, the second in command, to charge at all risks, with the whole body of the Bengal and Sind horsemen, on the enemy's right.

'It was the command of a master spirit, and with fiery speed and courage it was obeyed. Spurring hard, those eastern horsemen disregarded or drove the Baluch matchlock men from the village of Katri and galloped unchecked across the small nullahs and ditches about it, which were, however, so numerous and difficult that fifty of the Sind troopers were cast from their saddles at once by the leaps. But, dashing through the Baluch guns on that flank, riding over the high bank of the Fuleli, they crossed the deep bed, gained the plain beyond, and charged with irresistible fury. Major Storey, leading the Bengal troopers, fell on the enemy's infantry to the left; the Sind horse fell on the Mirs' camp and cavalry, putting all who encountered them to the sword, and spreading confusion along the rear of the line of battle on the Fuleli. Then at last the Baluch swordsmen, whose fury

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THE BATTLE OF MEEANEE

Painted by order of Sir George Hutt, who commanded the Bombay Artillery. Sir C. Napier and Col. Pennefather are urging the line to charge. Lieut. McMurdo is in front with his horse shot under him: most of the gunners being casualties, the 22nd are working the guns.

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was scarcely to be resisted before, somewhat abated their fighting and began to waver, looking behind them. The 22nd first saw their masses shake, and, leaping forward with the shout of victory, pushed them backwards into the deep ravine, and there closed in combat again. The Madras sappers did the like; the sepoys followed their example; and at the same time the multitude in the *shikargah* abandoned that cover, and joined the left of the line of battle in the dry bed of the Fuleli, where the conflict was now renewed. And how fiercely the brave barbarians still fought may be gathered from this: a soldier of the 22nd regiment, bounding forward, drove his bayonet into the breast of a Baluchi; instead of falling, the rugged warrior cast away his shield, and, seizing the musket with his left hand, writhed his body forwards on the bayonet, until he could with one sweep of his sword—for the Baluchi needs no second blow—avenge himself; both fell dead together!

'However, the battle was lost for the Mirs, and slowly the Baluchis began to retreat; yet not in dispersion, nor with marks of fear; in heavy masses they moved, keeping together, with their broad shields slung over their backs, their heads half turned and their eyes glaring with fury. The victors followed closely, pouring in volley after volley until tired of slaughtering; yet these stern, implacable warriors still preserved their habitual swinging stride, and would not quicken it to a run though death was at their heels! Two or three thousand who were on the extreme right, having been passed by the cavalry untouched, kept their position, and seemed disposed to make another rush. The whole of the British guns were immediately turned upon them with such heavy discharges of grape and shells, that they also lost hope and went off with the others. Yet so heavy were the retreating masses, so doggedly did they move, so disposed did they seem to renew the conflict, which would then have been on a level plain without protection for the British flanks, and without the advantage of the high bank, that the General did not think it fitting to provoke

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them any further. He halted his army, recalled his cavalry, and formed a large square, placing his baggage and camp followers in the centre.'[1]

Meeanee was a real soldier's battle, won by sheer hard fighting. Napier's tactics have come in, like everything he did, for a good deal of criticism. He failed to observe that the river bed was held in strength, and the army, like the 21st Lancers at Omdurman, walked into a trap.[2] But the contours of the ground made this difficult, if not impossible, to see at a distance, and the Baluch guns, pushed well forward, prevented closer reconnaissance. More pertinent is the criticism of his impetuous demand that the troops, when they crowned the banks of Fuleli, should charge the masses they found awaiting them. Had they 'gone over the top' in the way Napier wanted them to, they would have merely played the enemy's game, and must infallibly have shared the fate of Jackson and Teasdale and his heroic havildars.[3] Luckily, the men themselves knew better. 'The behaviour of our men,' says General (then Lieutenant) Sir Montague McMurdo, of the 22nd, 'when they charged to the edge of the bank of the Fuleli, surprised me exceedingly; but as the fighting went on I saw that they had judged rightly; and their example was implicitly followed by the native regiments on their left. The line recoiled some six or eight paces, and there remained deaf to all orders and entreaties to renew the charge; the men advancing only to deliver their fire into the thick masses of the enemy in the river

[1] *Conquest of Scinde*, lot. cit. Sir William's account of his brother's battle is by far the most vivid that we have. The reader should, however, note the criticisms of details in *Sir Charles Napier*, by Dr. T. Rice Holmes, Appendix M.

[2] *Hist. Brit. Army*, xii, pp. 290 ff.

[3] Napier, it need hardly be said, did *not* agree! 'We ought to have gone slap over the bank, and had the 22nd been old soldiers, they would have done so; but such young lads were amazed.' *Life and Opinions*, by Sir W. Napier (1857), ii, p. 327.

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bed, and returning to load; this mode of fighting was continued for the greater part of one hour. The behaviour of the Baluchis was equally strange and unexpected, but perhaps equally natural under the circumstances. Their fire, beaten down in volume by our rolling musketry, was only sustained in a desultory manner. They could not make any impression upon our line beyond forcing it back a few paces. They could not retreat, because they were pressed upon from behind by the masses, of which they formed the front rank. Driven desperate by the unceasing musketry, the masses frequently charged with sword and shield over the bank; but as these rushes were not made in concert along their line, our men were able to lap round their flanks and hurl them back over the edge.'[1]

Fortunately, the Baluch host was not an army, but a collection of feudal levies. Gallant men as they were, they had no cohesion, and less discipline. Small bodies of men would charge our line and get shot down; had they advanced in one irresistible wave, our little force must have been overwhelmed. It was a victory won, as Fortescue says, by courage and good leadership, and it restored to our soldiers the prestige which had been so badly shaken in Afghanistan: it showed conclusively that the sepoys, properly led, were more than a match for an Asiatic army, however brave, five times their number. Those who compare Meeanee to Kitchener's victories in the Soudan forget that our men were very little better armed than their opponents; the weapon that won the battle of Meeanee was the 'Brown Bess'. What a difference this made may be gathered from General McMurdo's remarks on some of the peculiarities of the old musket, which sound strangely to those who have known nothing but the breech-loader. After about half an hour's fighting, 'I observed,' he says, 'along the line what I judged to be about ten per cent of the men engaged constantly

[1] Quoted in the *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, by W. Napier Bruce, p. 203.

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with their locks; either in wiping moisture from the pan, or in chipping their blunted flints; and I saw some even change them for new ones! thus involving quite a mechanical operation with the screw of the hammer. But in doing these things the men did not fall out to the rear, as on the parade, but stood their ground in line, with their bayonet points to the enemy. One other observation I made at this time. I saw the men dispense at last with their ramrods; the cartridge of the old smooth-bore fitted so loosely in the barrel that the weight of the ball, accompanied by a sharp stroke of the butt upon the ground, was sufficient to send it home.'

That Napier had as little doubt of the correctness of his tactics at Meeanee, as he had about the justice of his cause, may be gathered from the entries in his diary.[1] And we cannot do better than to quote his own words on the subject:

'Meeanee was, in my view, the best-fought of the battles, because I am not aware of any considerable error; because my troops were not so good, nor so numerous as at Dubba, the odds being thirty-five thousand against less than two thousand at the first; whereas at Dubba they were only twenty-six thousand against five thousand. At Meeanee those of my troops who had seen any service before had all been defeated by natives, and none of them knew me; they had served under what General Nott calls a "Horse Guards general" who, having more men than the Afghans, had been defeated.[2] This told against me. My best native regiments, the grenadiers under Clibborn, had been defeated at Noofusk by the hillmen,[3] and both remembered it; they did not fall on the enemy at Meeanee, and yet were a fourth of my whole army! By stopping the gap in the wall on my

[1] *Life and Opinions*, iv, p. 108; cf. iii, 289–90.

[2] The reference is to General England, and the unsuccessful operations at Haikalzai, March, 1842.

[3] The Marris, August, 1840.

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right, I, in fact, won the battle; for, though the charge of cavalry decided the victory, it could not have been made if the gap had not first been stopped.

'We cannot judge our own deeds impartially, and I may be wrong; but my opinion is that for four things I deserved credit as a commander at Meeanee: (1) The formation of my enormous baggage as a fortress, by which it defended itself and my rear at the same time. (2) Stopping the gap, and thus paralyzing a great force of the enemy in the *shikargah*. (3) Making the cavalry charge as they did. (4) My formation in square after victory, as a precaution against a renewed attack by overpowering numbers, which was in the enemy's power and with the most terrible effect, as we were on a plain where his whole force could reach us. I made these four arrangements under circumstances to try the nerves, for the danger was tremendous, the noise of firing great, and the smoke preventing clear views of the enemy; indeed, when I sent orders for the cavalry charge, my expectation was to be cut down every instant. Pennefather, Harding, Willie, Teasdale, Jackson, Phayre, were all down around me, with lots of soldiers. Perhaps I am vain in giving myself credit for these things, but I know I did not lose my calmness of mind at that time. I expected to die, but did not think of it to disturb me; I thought only of how to win, and my only disturbing thought was that the troops might give way.

'The Baluchis were not crowded on the wall when we were advancing to the attack—they had been, before that moment, but were not then. One man sat astride on it, while firing at us, which was the only way he could sit, for it was not above a foot thick at top—I believe his fire was at me, and that he was a marksman put there as knowing me. He had only three shots, for, seeing him so intent on us, I told some of the 22nd to shoot him, and they did so; he fell like a lump of lead on our side. We had seen matchlocks handed up to him. I swept the whole wall well with my telescope before we advanced, and while under their cannonade: there was not then a

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man but this one on it. I also saw through the opening obliquely, a long way, and ascertained that there was no scaffolding to enable them to fire over, nor any loopholes to fire through the wall. It was this which made me think the gap in the wall was broken to let them sally out upon our rear, and the moment I was satisfied that there were neither loopholes, nor banquettes, I ordered the advance. Very particular was my examination, for though Red Rover stands steady under fire, I got from the beast's back, and again carefully swept the wall and examined the breach.

'I did not think of sending Tew in till we were advancing, my thought previously being only as to how the enemy was to be dealt with when he should rush out. Many things came like flashes across my mind. I was not satisfied with my thoughts, the matchlock fire was very heavy, and there was no time to lose: suddenly the idea came into my head to attack them through the wall, as the best check, and at once a company was sent there. I could spare no more, and told Tew he must defend the opening to the last; or, rather, I sent him that order, for the 22nd had already got to firing, were in some confusion and matters had put on a dangerous aspect. Tew beat them back, but found plenty of them, and fell himself about sixty yards within the gap, and there his men held on: he could not have gone further, thousands filled the wood upon whom, soon afterwards, we opened a nine-pounder, through the wall lower down, which told tremendously. This relieved Tew's men, who would otherwise have been very sorely pressed; yet I could not have aided them with guns had they been beaten back.

'The battle began at nine o'clock, and we formed on the opposite side of the Fuleli at one o'clock, the firing still going on, for the 22nd nearly shot me: they thought a native of our army, who was drunk and rode flourishing up to me, was a Baluch going to cut me down, and they let fly a volley at him: he escaped, as well as I and those with me! There were no enemies in sight

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then, and it was past one o'clock. What the despatch says was taken from all our watches. Waddington is probably right about the extent of our front, but not as to the Amirs' front, which was twelve hundred yards. As to the dead he is decidedly wrong. Two officers counted four hundred bodies within a semi-circle of fifty paces' radius, where I was in the battle, near the little nullah running into the Fuleli. Now to the left of that were all those killed by the 12th Regiment, by the grenadiers, and by the cavalry: a pretty lot! the ground was covered with dead! Then came the *shikargah*; no one can tell the number there, the wood was so dense, but the artillery and Tew's men killed very many which were not counted; finally there were numbers that died of their wounds in the country around.

'The cavalry never entered the wood on our left, a horse could not go five yards for the brushwood. Waddington, being with me, could only know what passed with the grenadiers and cavalry by hearsay. I never heard that Tucker asked Pattle to charge; Tucker was in command of a squadron only, Major Storey commanded the regiment. When the cavalry advanced Tucker received six balls from the village of Katri, fell and lay still until taken away: he behaved very well, but was not more exposed than others; he was only distinguished by being so much wounded. The grenadiers went to the right-about by Clibborn's order; but there were a thousand stories about them. The 9th Bengal cavalry led the charge, for Jacob, having gone round the village, was unable to advance, came back, and followed the 9th cavalry, which, on entering the river bed, wheeled to its left a little, while the Sind Horse, led by Fitzgerald, went headlong at the camp.

'I do not exaggerate in saying that at Meeanee there were spots where the dead were in heaps, the centre of each being four bodies at least, piled above the ground. The greatest scene of destruction I ever saw before was the lane going up to Houguemont; but I assure you it was nothing to the bed of the Fuleli:

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it was horrible. When they found they could not force our line their courage fell, and their rushes over the edge of the bank became less frequent, while our men pushed more boldly to the edge; then the Baluchis cut at their legs, but the soldiers, growing more cool and expert as the battle went on, stepped back to reload, and, putting the muzzles of their muskets just over the edge, let fly into the mass. Covered by their shields, the Baluchis fell over each other, and wounded men remained beneath the dead, glad of the protection. Those who attempted to run were shot down as they ascended the opposite bank; so that from that part not one man, in my belief, escaped. The soldiers bayoneted all that had life on the top of the heaps as we passed in pursuit, and all below were smothered.

'The *shikargah* must also have had numbers of dead from the hammering with grape it sustained for at least two hours, and from Tew's fire. The numbers carried away and those who died of wounds cannot be counted; but all the Baluchis said, and still maintain, that eight thousand were killed and wounded. I said six thousand in my despatch. Scarcely have I met a man, rich or poor, who does not say he lost part of his family in the great battle.'

The 25th played a distinguished part in the engagement; they were on the right of the line, supporting their comrades in arms, the 22nd, on whom the brunt of the fighting fell. 'Had the 22nd and the 25th given way,' Napier noted in his Diary, 'all would have been lost.' 'It was to the gallant Bombay army that the credit was due . . . there was my own, the 22nd Queen's Regiment, there was the brave 25th Regiment, Bombay N.I., which regiment I love, and this army gave me the victory,' he said afterwards, at a regimental dinner at Karachi. And speaking while presenting new colours to the 22nd, he exclaimed, 'This brave regiment, joined by our dusky and brave companions in arms, the glorious 25th and 12th Regiments of Bombay N.I., won the battle of Meeanee

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—won the battle of Hyderabad—won Sind for England!'[1]

The losses of the 25th were heavy. Major Teasdale, two havildars and 14 privates were killed, and three British officers, and 28 other ranks wounded. We have already referred to the exploit of Lieutenant C. E. Marston (afterwards Major-General Marston, who organized and commanded for many years the famous Sind Police), who saved the life of the Commander-in-Chief in the furious mêlée at the crisis of the battle. Napier was attacked by three Baluch swordsmen. Young Marston cut down the first, ran the second through the heart, and engaged the third, while a soldier of the 22nd came up and bayoneted him. Napier thus describes the episode in his diary:

'At Meeanee I was alone, in front of his regiment, when a Baluch came over the edge of the bank, ten paces from me: he looked around wildly, but seeing me came on; not fast, yet with long strides. My hand having been broken, I could not cope with such a customer, but held half my reins, with great torture, in the broken hand, designing to give Red Rover a chuck that should put his head between me and the coming blow. The Baluch was only four paces from me when Marston, on foot, passed my right side and received the swordsman's blow on his shoulder-strap; it went deep into the brass scales, and the Baluch caught the counter blow on his shield, which was beaten down; the next instant the bayonet of a soldier went nearly to the hilt in his side, and my attention to the general fight engrossed me too much for further observation. I might have defended myself, but, crippled as I was, I believe Marston saved my life.'[2]

'I think,' said the gallant General, in presenting

[1] *The Indian Command of Sir C. J. Napier*, by J. Mawson (Calcutta, 1851), Appendix.

[2] *Life and Opinions*, iii, p. 289.

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Marston a sword as a memento of his bravery, 'so able a swordsman as yourself ought to have a good weapon—one which, like your courage, will never fail in any trial.'[1]

On February 22nd Sir Charles Napier issued the following General Order, thanking the troops for their services:

'1. Officers who commanded Regiments and Corps in the battle of the 17th are requested to express to those under their orders the admiration that the Major-General feels for the intrepidity with which on that day they so gloriously maintained the honour of the Queen's and Company's arms—and it has been his earnest desire to represent their brilliant conduct to the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in such terms as the limited nature of a despatch would admit. At the same time, he feels how inadequately he has described the enduring devotion of the Queen's and Company's officers—a devotion to the service too conspicuous not to be forever impressed upon his mind.

'2. As many deeds were done both by officers, non-commissioned officers and private soldiers, of which deeds he has no better means of becoming acquainted, he requests of commanding officers to send him a list and a record of those who especially distinguished themselves in the battle that he may lay the same before the Governor-General.'

Napier was the first commanding officer to mention in despatches the names of individual non-commissioned officers and private soldiers who had distinguished themselves by gallant conduct in the field.

After Meeanee, Hyderabad was occupied without difficulty; the Mirs surrendered and were placed in confinement, but were allowed to keep about 1,200 retainers.

[1] This sword is still a treasured possession of the Marston family.

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Alarming intelligence now arrived. Sher Mahommed of Mirpur,[1] who had taken no part in the battle of Meeanee (he had intended to join the Mirs on the following day), was reported to be advancing on Hyderabad with 25,000 men, augmented every moment by fugitives from the battle. He openly boasted that he would quickly 'Kabul' the English. Napier was in a quandary. His tiny force, weakened by casualties, was totally inadequate to hold the fortress and city of Hyderabad (which was full of spies and sympathizers with the Baluchis, including the Mirs' retainers),[2] and at the same time to meet the new foe. 'My position,' he writes, 'was a terrible one from February 17th to March 22nd. I had hold of river, fortress and town, three miles off, Mirs' prisoners, immense treasure, and 40,000 men, as all accounts stated, gathering upon me; a large hospital, and to guard all these at most 2,500 men. And, besides all this, the anxiety about the brigade, ordered to push double marches from Sukkur; and to protect which, had the enemy ventured to march against it, I must have pursued with 2,000 men at most, an awkward number to follow 40,000.' But Napier's spirits, as usual, rose with the approach of danger. He built a large perimeter camp, containing his magazine and hospital, about three miles outside the city, but, in order to show his men that he despised the foe, he made them pitch their tents outside! On March 15th, emissaries arrived from Sher Mahommed with an insolent message. At that moment the evening gun fired. 'You hear that?' said Napier, turning his back on the envoys. 'That is my answer to your chief. Begone!' Meanwhile reinforcements were being hurried forward by land and river. Major Maurice Stack, 3rd Bombay Cavalry, was pressing on from Sukkur with the fine Ferozepore brigade, 800 bayonets, 300 sabres,

[1] Jacob protests against the fatuity of the title of 'Lion' given to Sher Mahommed by William Napier; the name is as common in Sind as John Smith in London.

[2] These were so truculent that they had to be disarmed, and the Mirs put on a steamer.

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and Leslie's Troop, R.H.A. But there was terrible danger that Sher Mahommed would intercept this little force and bring it to action before it effected a junction with the main body. As a matter of fact, Stack was actually attacked, about five miles out of Hyderabad, but the Baluchis were badly led, and the jaded column marched into the British camp at midnight on the 21st March. Napier had told Sher Mahommed to surrender before the 23rd, or he would come out and take him. On the morning of the 22nd, the General was just remarking at breakfast that his luck would be great, if the remaining reinforcements, from up or down stream, came in time, when a member of his staff cried out, 'Hullo! what are those masts?' The troops from Karachi and Sukkur had arrived! This gave him two more infantry regiments, the 8th and 21st Bombay N.I., the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, and 5 more guns. The next day he took the field with a force of 3,500 bayonets, 1,100 sabres, and 17 guns. The little army was divided into four brigades. The second brigade, consisting of the 21st and 25th, was led by Major Woodburn of the 25th, with Lieut. Marston as his staff officer, while Captain Jackson commanded the 25th Regiment. The army marched out about midnight, March 23rd, in the direction of Khuseri, where the Baluchi general was said to be concentrating his forces.

'About ten miles had been passed over since the army left the camp, and still the exact situation of the enemy was unknown, when suddenly an emissary came with information that "The Lion" was in position with his whole force at Dubba, only two miles on the left. The direction of the column was instantly changed. The irregular horsemen were sent forward at a rapid pace; the General put spurs to his horse, and in a quarter of an hour found himself on a plain in front of the whole Baluchi army. Far and wide it stretched; the whole plain was swarming with cavalry and infantry, and yet he could not see above half the real numbers, nor get

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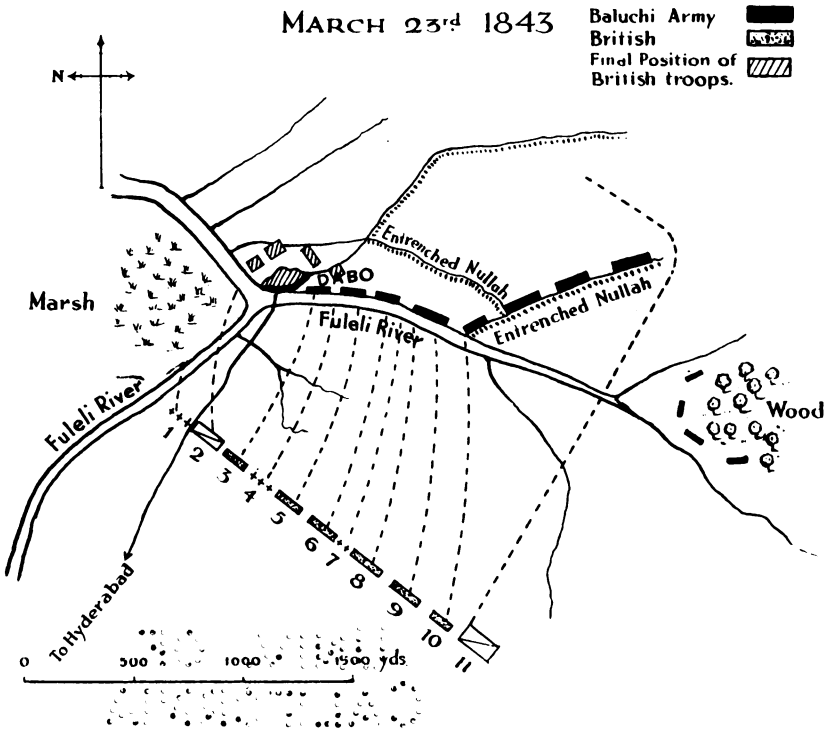
BATTLE of HYDERABAD (DABO)

MARCH 23rd 1843



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any distinct view of their order of battle. There were, however, more than twenty-five thousand fighting men with sword and shield and matchlock, and they had fifteen guns, eleven of which were in battery. Two lines of infantry were there entrenched, and behind them a heavy mass of cavalry in reserve. Their right rested on the Fuleli, the bed of which, though generally dry, had at that point a large pond of mud protecting the flank, and beyond the nullah was a thick *shikargah*, which prevented the position being turned except by a wide movement.

'The front was covered by a nullah twenty feet wide, and eight feet deep, with the usual high banks, which were scarped so as to form a parapet. Behind this nullah the first line of infantry was posted, extending on a slightly waving trace for a mile, in a direction perpendicular to the Fuleli. From thence it was prolonged another mile in the same line to a wood, which was occupied and appeared to be the left flank of the Baluch position. It was, however, not so. Another nullah, scarped like the first, went off at the end of the mile in a diagonal direction to the rear, forming an obtuse angle to the front line, and there the left of the enemy's army was really posted; the wood only contained an isolated body thrown forward in an offensive and menacing manner.

'Thus the true front of battle extended from the right for one mile perpendicularly to the Fuleli, presenting what may be termed the right wing and centre to an attack; but the left wing behind the second nullah was refused and masked from an attack, by that ditch, by the prolongation of the nullah covering the right and centre, and by the wood, which was again covered by several smaller nullahs. All the cavalry were behind the left in one great mass; and behind the right wing, close to the Fuleli, stood the village of Dubba or Naraja, which was filled with men and prepared for resistance by cuts and by loopholing of the houses. But this was not all the defence.

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'Between the first line of the right and centre and the village of Dubba was a second nullah, forty-two feet wide and seventeen feet deep, with its bank scarped and prepared like the first. Both of them had, however, one or two ramps for the purpose of advancing or retreating, which proved of singular service to the British in the fight.

'This second and largest nullah extended to where the smaller one, covering the left wing, went off diagonally, that is to say, a mile, but no farther; and it was planted thickly with the second line of the Baluch army. Sher Mahommed's guns also were ranged behind it, with the exception of one which was placed on a mound to the right, between the two rising lines and raking the bed of the Fuleli. The enemy had also scarped two smaller nullahs at a considerable distance behind the left and centre of the position, apparently to protect his rear, or to give himself a new front if he should be turned. He had cleared the low jungle in front of his line of battle, and in this faultless position resolutely awaited the attack, under the command of Sher Mahommed.'[1]

After reconnoitring, the Major-General ordered the force to form in the following order drawn up in line fronting the enemy and about 1,500 yards from their position.

Sind Horse	Commanded by	Captain Jacob
3rd Regiment Bombay Light Cavalry ..	,,	,,	Captain Delamain
1st Troop Horse Artillery	,,	,,	Major Leslie
1st Grenadier Regiment N.I.	,,	,,	,, Clibborne
8th Regiment N.I. ..	,,	,,	,, Brown
12th Regiment N.I. ..	,,	,,	Captain Fisher
9 Pounder Battery ..	,,	,,	,, Whitlie
21st Regiment N.I. ..	,,	,,	,, Stevens
25th Regiment N.I. ..	,,	,,	,, Jackson
Heavy Battery.. ..	,,	,,	,, Willoughby
6 Pounder Battery ..	,,	,,	,, Hutt

[1] *Conquest of Scinde*, pp. 376 ff.

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H.M.'s 22nd Regiment		Commanded by	Captain	George
9th Regiment Bengal Light Cavalry	..	,,	,,	Major Storey
Poona Horse	.. ..	,,	,,	Lieut. Tait

The detachment of Madras Sappers and Miners, commanded by Captain Henderson, attended the batteries.

The march of the British force from Hyderabad, being diagonal to the front of the Baluch army, brought the head of the column, marching left in front, near the right of the enemy. The line was immediately formed on the same slant, the cavalry being drawn up on the wings, and the artillery in the intervals between the regiments; thus the right was somewhat refused, though not in so great a degree as the enemy's left.

'The British guns did not open until the Major-General had completed his dispositions and the different corps took up their places with the greatest steadiness and precision. At half-past eight a.m. the Heavy Battery, composed of two 8-inch howitzers, began firing, first shrapnel and afterwards common shell (as the fuses of the former were found to be bad). Shortly afterwards the H.A. came round along the rear to the left of H.M.'s 22nd Regiment and a little in advance of it, and opened a fire on the village which was full of the enemy. At this time our advance of the whole line was made of about 500 yards and then the 6 and 9 Pounder and Heavy Battery commenced a fire all along the line of the enemy's position, which soon silenced the greater number of their guns and caused them to take shelter behind the embankments and in the canals. This fire was continued for some time and the practice of the artillery appeared very correct indeed—two of the enemy's magazines were blown up about the same time by the shells, followed soon after by a third explosion of their powder. At about 10 a.m. the infantry advanced to the attack by direct echelon of regiments from the left, H.M.'s 22nd Regiment leading directly on the village. It would appear that during the engagement a great portion of the enemy had,

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under cover of their defences, gone towards their right, as when our troops approached the canals and embankments they were found particularly numerous at that point, and not at all in the same strength on their left as they had at first shown themselves; the consequence was that H.M.'s 22nd especially, and next to them the 25th and 21st Regiments, had a heavy fire of matchlocks kept up on them while the other regiments more to the right met with little or no opposition. As each regiment approached the canals it began to fire while advancing and soon drove the enemy from behind these, capturing their guns and many standards; many fled in all directions, while others retired to the village, from whence they kept up a fire from some of the houses, but they were soon killed or driven off by our men.'[1]

'Soon it was discovered that the nullah in front and the village beyond had not been neglected by the Sidi Hoche;[2] that brave man had filled them with men, and now, at the head of his brother Sidis, awaited this attack in the foremost ranks on the right. Their matchlocks and the single gun on the hillock played with incessant activity, and the march of the 22nd was marked by carnage; half the light company went down beneath the fire from the first nullah; and behind was the second and greater ditch, more strongly lined with warriors, while the village beyond seemed suddenly alive with men whose matchlocks could reach the advancing line.

'Now Sir C. Napier felt that he had not judged the enemy's skill rightly, and that the rush of men towards the village and their right wing had been not to occupy, but to strengthen, that flank when they saw it menaced by the disposition of the British order of battle. But there was no time, no means to alter the mode of attack, and, as generally happens, even with the greatest captains, courage was required to repair the error of arrangements.

[1] Regimental Records, 125th, Napier's Rifles.
[2] An Abyssinian general of Sher Mahommed.

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'With the foremost of the assailants rode the General, meaning himself to lead the charge over the bank, when suddenly from the right came a horseman at full gallop to tell him all the cavalry of that wing was charging. Hearing this, he concluded that the wood, as he had anticipated, was suddenly vomiting forth all its ambushed warriors, and that his right was turned. Wherefore, desiring Major Poole of the 22nd to lead the attack on the nullah, he went at full speed himself to the right, to arrange the new line of battle he had before revolved in his mind. The horseman's report was correct. The whole of the cavalry of the right wing was madly charging across the minor nullahs covering the enemy's left, not because the Baluchis from the wood had moved, but that, seeing numbers of the enemy still hurrying in apparent confusion towards the centre, Major Stack concluded it to be a panic, and went headlong down with all his gallant horsemen upon their left wing. He thus uncovered the flank of the line of battle, and exposed the whole army to a defeat, if the wood had really been filled with the selected division of Baluchis appointed for the counter-stroke designed by the Sidi, Hoche Mahommed.

'It was a great error, but a grand and stirring one. It could not be remedied. The whole body of cavalry was at full speed, clearing the nullahs without a check, the riders' spurs in their horses' sides, their different war-cries pealing high and clear, their swords whirling above their heads in gleaming circles; there was the fiery Jacob and the terrible Fitzgerald careering alike in the same path of error, while the splendid troopers of the 3rd Cavalry, and the red turbans of the wild horsemen of Sind speeding through smoke and dust, streamed like meteors behind them.

'For a moment the General looked at the scene, at first with anger, then with admiration, and then, casting his eyes towards the wood, and seeing no indications of any rush from there, while the redoubling thunder of his own artillery called him to the left, he turned at once,

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and, trusting all to fortune and to courage, went back with such speed that he reached the 22nd just as Major Poole, who commanded the brigade, was on the point of storming the first nullah. Riding straight into the foremost ranks, he made his presence known by the same clear, high-pitched cry to charge, which had sent those fiery soldiers headlong to the fight at Meeanee; and here, although the first obstacle and danger to be encountered was even more formidable than the storming the bank of the Fuleli in that memorable battle, where the whole line had staggered before the swarming swordsmen, no check occurred. There was no hesitation to abate the furious charge. The gallant Lieut. Coote first mounted the bank, seized a Baluch standard, and waved it in triumph while he reeled along the narrow edge with a deep wound in his side. Then, with a crashing shout, the soldiers leaped into the midst of the swordsmen, who were no sluggards to deal with, for there fought the black hero, Hoche, and his brother Sidis, and there they fell.

'The murderous fire of the British guns and musketry was dreadful, and the bayonet clashing with the sword bore back the bravest and strongest, or levelled them in the dust, until the struggling warriors were forced into the second and deepest nullah, where with desperate fury the battle was renewed, as if the previous struggle had been as nothing. But still, with conquering strength, and wasting fire, and piercing steel, the 22nd forced its bloody way through the dense masses, supported by the sepoys of the 25th, who striving on its right kept pace and stroke in this terrible conflict. Now the victorious troops passed the second nullah, and poured with undiminished fury on the rear of the retreating Baluchis, until they reached the village of Dubba, where the Lugharis and Nizamanis, two of the most warlike tribes of Sind, were well entrenched in the houses, and once more contended for the victory. The two regiments thus opposed lapped round the nearest point of the houses, and meanwhile the cavalry of the left wing were directed to turn

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THE BATTLE OF HYDERABAD

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the village. This they effected, partly by the bed of the Fuleli, partly across the nullahs; then, galloping round the left of Dubba, they cut it off, and got a view of the plain beyond, where the cavalry of the right wing were now seen driving the Baluchis, horsemen and footmen, before them in scattered bands.

'This rush put the whole line into some confusion at first, and at that moment a Baluch magazine exploded close to the General while he was restoring order; nearly all around him were killed and wounded; he alone, though his clothes were singed and a bullet broke the sword in his hand, remained unhurt. The enemy, fighting very hard and strongly, were finally driven from the village, and those who survived joined the other beaten and retreating masses; there was, however, no such thing as flight amongst the warriors on foot, though the horsemen did not show the same courage. Some of the Baluchs went off to the desert with "The Lion"; the greater part made for the Indus, designing to cross that river and take refuge on the right bank; but the victorious cavalry of the right turned them from the cultivated districts, and drove them in heaps towards the waste.

'The Bengal and Poona Horse, led by Major Storey and Captain Tait, under the immediate command of the General, who had forced his way through Dubba at the head of the infantry, now followed the retreating masses of the right, putting them to the sword for several miles, yet not without loss to themselves; the brave Captain Garrett of the Bengal Horse and others fell. The Baluch swordsman is at all times dangerous.

'When the General returned with the cavalry of the left wing from the pursuit, the whole of the infantry met him with loud cheers, thus proclaiming their admiration of his conduct as a commander in this battle, which lasted three hours and was very bloody. Hoche and three other chieftains, two of them Talpuris, the other a Murree, fell on the field. The victors lost two hundred and seventy men and officers, of which number one hundred and forty-seven were of the 22nd Regiment. The vanquished

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lost about five thousand, and they would have suffered still more but for the untimely halt of the cavalry on the right. Eight hundred bodies were lying in the nullahs and at Dubba; but all the villages and lanes beyond the latter place were so filled with dead and dying, that to avoid them the army was forced to encamp on the ground it occupied before the action commenced. All the fallen Baluchs were of mature age, grim-visaged men of athletic forms; the carcass of a youth was not to be found.'[1]

Such is the picturesque account of the battle, given by the historian of the conquest of Sind. As a matter of fact, it is probable that, except in individual instances, the enemy did not, as a whole, fight as well at Dubba as they had done at Meeanee. The movement from their left wing into the village of Dubba may have been due, as Fortescue surmises, to an actual panic on their part, in which case Major Stack's cavalry charge, which Napier condemned, was fully justified and contributed materially to the victory.[2] Our men, on the other hand, fought with much greater confidence. Napier says, 'They were like cucumbers.'

The fiercest part of the fighting occurred in storming Dubba, where the lion's share fell, as at Meeanee, to the 22nd and 25th. The impetuous Irishmen lost heavily, 23 killed and 139 wounded, the 25th coming off far more lightly, with 3 killed and 26 wounded. In the fighting round Dubba, the 25th covered themselves with glory. In the words of their Brigadier, General Woodburn,[3] 'when this regiment reached the village, the fire of the enemy, though greatly lessened, was still kept up in a very galling way from many of the houses. This was particularly the case from a mosque which had been loopholed, and shots from it had knocked over several sepoys. The building was entered by several of the men,

[1] *Conquest of Scinde*, pp. 383 ff.

[2] *Hist. Brit. Army*, xii, pp. 298-9.

[3] This officer, who belonged to the 25th, died in 1860. (Tablet in St. Mary's Church, Poona.)

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who were almost immediately driven out by the enemy. On seeing this, Ensign Nixon and Lieut. Thompson, 25th Regiment, instantly rushed into it sword in hand and attacked the enemy, eight in number. The former officer cut down three. While so engaged, his life was saved by the latter (Lieut. Thompson) warding off cuts made at him. The sepoys, having in the meantime got in, disposed of the remaining five."[1] Lieut. (afterwards Major-General) Nixon, had a most distinguished career at Bhartpur as Political Agent during the Mutiny, and afterwards as British Consul at Bagdad. The 25th, said Napier, 'advanced with the steadiness of a review up to the entrenchments.' The day after the battle, he thanked the troops in the following General Order:

'To the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, both European and Native, who fought the battle which took place yesterday, the Major-General cannot help expressing his unqualified approbation and the pride he feels in having the honour of being their Commander. He especially congratulates the 3rd Light Cavalry on the opportunity which offered, and of which they took such prompt advantage, to charge the enemy. He congratulates the Horse Artillery[2] on the admirable and effectual advance made on the enemy's right flank. The conduct of these two renowned bands showed the Major-General that their fame in Afghanistan had been fairly won. All did right well, but to H.M.'s 22nd Regiment, upon whom the brunt of the battle fell, he must express his heartfelt praise, and sure he is that all the troops will join him in this feeling.'

After the battle, Sher Mahommed fled to Mirpur with Napier hard at his heels. The heat was now terrific,

[1] *Gazette*, May 29th, 1843, p. 587.

[2] This was Leslie's famous 'Eagle' Troop, now 'N' Battery, R.H.A. It was on our extreme left, and successfully enfiladed the enemy's line. Lieut. Smith, of this Battery, was killed while riding up to the nullah alone, to choose a position for his guns.

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and the troops, without helmets, or any other protection, and wearing their scarlet coats, tight stocks and cumbrous equipment, suffered cruelly. Napier himself was prostrated, and was probably saved only by the abstemious life he had always led. On the 23rd March, the army had marched for twelve miles, and fought a four hours' battle, with the thermometer at 110° F. But the river was rising, and Napier's only salvation lay in speedy action. Not a moment was to be lost. In two days the troops were outside the walls of Mirpur, forty miles away. Providentially, the great fortress surrendered without a blow; it was too strong to storm, and a siege, in the height of a Sind summer, was out of the question. But Umarkot, Sher Mahommed's last stronghold, still held out, and Napier sent a force, under Major Woodburn of the 25th, and Captain Whitlie, on a sixty miles' march over the desert to surprise it. It was on this occasion that Captain Brown, one of the General's A.D.C.'s, rode from Major Woodburn's force to Mirpur and back, carrying urgent despatches, and covering eighty miles on horseback without a stop, the thermometer standing at 130°F! The story of the operation is best told in Major Woodburn's own words:

'I do myself the honour to report, for the information of Major-General Sir C. Napier, K.C.B., Commanding in Sind, that, agreeably to the instructions conveyed to me by Captain Brown, A.D.C., and which I received at Joorbi at 2 p.m. on the 2nd instant, I marched with the 25th Regiment the same afternoon to join the detachment under Captain Whitlie then halted at Gurur, and which place (distant eighteen miles) was reached at 11 p.m.

'On joining I assumed command of the detachment, and after a halt of three hours the whole moved off and shortly after sunrise encamped at Syad ki Shahur, twelve miles from Gurur. At this place I found considerable difficulty in obtaining any correct intelligence as to whether the fort of Umarkot was occupied by a garrison

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of the enemy, but from what I could collect from different quarters, I was inclined to suppose it was not held by one of any strength. We marched from Syad ki Shahur shortly after midnight on the morning of the 4th and found the road an excellent one through to this place, and the distance is twenty-one miles. There was jungle the whole way, occasionally in thick patches, but generally composed of scattered bushes. As Umarkot was approached the jungle became thicker and higher, so that the country being a level plain, we did not fairly get a sight of the fort until within about 800 yards of the north-west bastion. At first no one was seen on the walls, but on nearing it, which I did with a party of Sind horsemen, to reconnoitre, some armed men showed themselves on the bastions: on observing this I directed Captain Jacob to go round to the eastern face of the fort with his regiment of Sind Horse for the purpose of preventing the escape of the garrison if they wished to run away, or to induce them to show their strength if they were inclined to defend themselves. In the meantime the heads of the Hindu population of the town of Umarkot came out and expressed their pleasure at the arrival of British troops, and made their submission. By them I was informed that, the greater part of the garrison having fled some days before, there were few men within the fort and they did not mean to resist, but would evacuate it on a guarantee being given that their lives would be spared. I desired Lieut. Fitzgerald, of the Sind Horse, to go and inform them their lives would be spared on condition that they came out and laid down their arms. While he was doing so I directed Captain Whitlie to bring up his guns and place them in position, as I concluded the sight of them would hasten the determination of the garrison. The infantry was also brought forward and was halted under cover of some trees. By the time these arrangements were made the garrison opened the gates and, coming out, laid down their arms and gave up the keys, giving thus into our possession a most important and strong

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fortress, having eleven guns mounted and with its defences in excellent condition, without the effusion of a single drop of blood. Lieutenant Moyle immediately took possession with his company of the 21st Regt. N.I.

'I had almost omitted to mention that the heat of the weather has been very great and the marches long ones. The troops have, from both these causes as well as from a scarcity of good water, had much to bear up against, but I am happy to say it has been done cheerfully, and at the end of each march hardly a man has been out of his place.

'These operations could not have been successfully conducted without astonishing exertions and resolution, which finally illustrated the character of the troops, and displayed the spirit which their General had awakened in them. On one of those long marches, which were almost continual, the 25th sepoys, being nearly maddened by thirst and heat, saw one of their water-carriers approaching with full skins of water; they rushed towards him in crowds, tearing away the skins and struggling together, with loud cries of Water! Water! At that moment, some half-dozen straggling soldiers of the 22nd came up, apparently exhausted, and asked for some. At once the generous Indians withheld their hands from the skins, forgot their own sufferings, and gave the fainting Europeans to drink; then they all moved on, the sepoys carrying the 22nd men's muskets for them, patting them on the shoulders, and encouraging them to hold out. It was in vain; they did so for a short time, but soon fell. It was then discovered that these noble fellows were all wounded, some deeply; but, thinking there was to be another fight, they had concealed their hurts, and forced nature to sustain the loss of blood, the pain of wounds, the burning sun, the long marches, and the sandy desert, that their last moments might be given to their country on another field of battle.'[1]

[1] The *camaraderie* between the 25th and the European regiments with which they brigaded was always remarkable. In Sind it was the 22nd. In the Central India campaign of 1857–8, it was the 86th.

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The spirits of the gallant soldiers, working under the most appalling conditions, which only those who have been through the horrors of a hot weather in Sind can really appreciate, were greatly raised when they heard that the following order, dated April 11th, had been received from the Governor-General:

'The Governor-General directs that the several corps which, by the G.O. of 5th ultimo, were permitted to wear the word "Hyderabad 1843" upon their appointment colours and standards respectively shall, in lieu thereof, bear the word "Meeanee". The Governor-General is pleased to authorize the 25th Regiment N.I. to bear upon their colours and appointments the word "Hyderabad".'

After the terrible slaughters of Meeanee and Dubba, it was impossible to get the Baluchis to stand up again to British troops. On June 13th Jacob's Horse, after a fierce pursuit, came into touch with Sher Mahommed's troopers, but they had no heart to fight, and dispersed without a blow. The Sind campaign was over.

For the next three years, the history of the 25th, after their heroic exertions of the previous six months, was comparatively uneventful. For the remainder of 1843, they were engaged in escort duty on the river Indus, and were only once seriously engaged, in a skirmish at the Laki Pass, where seven men were wounded. During 1844, and the greater part of 1845, they were at Karachi, where, on May 9th, they were reviewed by Sir Charles Napier. On the 10th October they were ordered to embark for Bombay; on the occasion of their departure from Sind, Napier issued the following farewell message to the gallant regiment which had fought so brilliantly under his command:

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'EXTRACT FROM GENERAL ORDERS
'BY
'HIS EXCELLENCY SIR C. J. NAPIER, K.C.B., G.C.B.,
'GOVERNOR OF SIND

'*Camp, Karachi,*
'*Thursday, 9th Oct., 1845.*

'The 25th Regiment are to embark for India. This regiment leaves Sind after five years of brilliant service.

'On the field of combat Fortune has attended its colours, and the courage displayed by those who fought under them showed that these hardy soldiers were worthy of her favours.

'Their old General bids them adieu. He can hardly expect ever again to have them under his command, but, while regretting this, he feels proud to reflect that his name will be associated with that of the 25th Regiment N.I. when those that survived the conquest of Sind shall be gathered to their comrades who fell in battle.

'C. J. NAPIER, M.G.'

January, 1846, found them in cantonments at Mhow, where, on March 23rd, the anniversary of the battle of Dubba, the Meeanee and Hyderabad medals were distributed by Mr. H. A. Hamilton, Resident of Indore. In his speech, Mr. Hamilton, addressing Colonel Woodburn, the Officers, N.C.O.'s and Sepoys of the 25th Regiment, said:

'When I was invited to be present on this occasion I little expected to be other than a mere spectator of an interesting ceremony, but when I was asked to take part in it I felt that a high distinction had been conferred upon me in making me the instrument by which the decorations awarded by the Government of India to this gallant regiment should be distributed.

'I feel my own inability to express myself on such an occasion, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that no

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words of mine could add to the high eulogiums which have already been passed on the gallant deeds of which this day is an anniversary. They have been well set forth, first by the distinguished General by whom you were so nobly led, then by the Government for whom you so bravely fought, and lastly—and a permanent distinction it is—in both Houses of Parliament, by whose unanimous votes their thanks were given to the brave officers and men engaged in the battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad.

'This, men, is an anniversary of which you may well be proud!

'Soldiers of the 25th, your gallant bearing on these battlefields are inscribed on one of the brightest pages of our Indian history. Of the conduct of the British officers and men it is needless to speak. The courage, the devotion, the discipline of the native troops in those eventful fights exalted, if possible, the already high character of the Indian sepoy. The desperate valour with which you were opposed could not check your onward progress. It was a mortal strife, and, under the guidance of Providence, your indomitable courage enabled the illustrious General to carry out his admirable dispositions, and victory was yours. You vanquished an almost countless enemy, brave in their own hearts, confident in themselves, and desperate in their resistance, yet they yielded to your valorous onslaught. Your discipline enabled you to carry the day; the victory was complete. Decorations awarded for such victories may well be proudly displayed upon your gallant breasts. The names of Meeanee and Hyderabad will ever shine forth amongst the brilliant deeds for which the Indian Army is renowned and will, in after years, when we who are now assembled on this third anniversary shall have passed away, serve as a beacon to the aspiring soldier.

'Long may you all live to wear the honour you have so nobly won; and when your services may again be required in the field, may you have fresh opportunities

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to add to those decorations which now are emblazoned upon your Regimental Colour.

'The army of India is a noble army, and that of Bombay a gallant portion of it. Look down the ranks drawn out this evening to witness this ceremonial—you will see some of the medalled heroes of Ghazni under a gallant officer,[1] who in the campaign of Afghanistan earned for himself a niche in the Temple of Fame.

'Look through the list of regiments foremost in the advance in Sind, and you will find the number of the gallant regiment on my left—the soldiers of the 25th. If there be anything that can add to the honour on this occasion, it is to receive your honours in the presence of such distinguished comrades and brethren in arms.

'And now, Sir, let me offer you my acknowledgments for the honour you have conferred upon me. A more gratifying task was never imposed upon me. I have acquitted myself unworthily, others would have performed it more satisfactorily, but no one could have done it with greater sincerity or actuated with feelings of higher admiration for the noble military service, in which you are a distinguished member.'

On the 27th of the same month the ceremony was repeated at Indore, in the presence of His Highness the Maharaja Tukojirao Holkar and the whole Darbar, for the benefit of the two companies on guard duty there.

From 1850 to 1854 the 25th were at Neemuch, where, on January 17th, 1853, an interesting and important ceremony was performed. This was the presentation of new colours by Brigadier-General Foster Stalker, C.B., commanding the Rajputana Field Force.

The Brigade was formed in three sides of a square, the 3/3rd Artillery and the 1st Regiment Light Cavalry (Lancers) on the flanks, and the 25th Regiment in the centre, all in line, the right of the Artillery and the left

[1] Major Blood, Horse Artillery.

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of the Cavalry being fifteen paces from the flanks of the 25th Regiment, the bass drum about fifteen paces in front of the colours of the 25th Regiment, and the new colours laid across it, on each side a flank Company Colour Havildar close to them. The Grenadier company of the 25th Regiment (after the regiment was in line) was marched and formed facing the regiment, about ten paces from the new colours, the band by their side. The Brigade took open order, the ranks of the 25th at four paces' distance (with the exception of the Grenadier company 25th Regiment) and the General was received with a salute from the Brigade. The Brigade having shouldered arms, the officers of the regiment were called to the front (European and Native) and formed around the new colours which were then given by the Commanding Officer to the General, who handed them to the two Ensigns appointed to receive them, kneeling on their right knees for that purpose. The Ensigns now rose, and the General spoke as follows:

'Gentlemen, I present to you the New Colours of your Regiment. May they ever be the rallying point of brave soldiers, and be, as your old ones have been, the records of victory.

'Major Jackson and officers of the 25th Regiment, the battles of "Meeanee" and "Hyderabad" will speak better for the gallantry and discipline of your regiment than any praise I can bestow. These names inscribed on your old colours are perpetuated in those I have just had the pleasing duty to present. You have achieved a name under that gallant and distinguished soldier, Sir Charles Napier, and, although you may not again have so accomplished and brave a leader, yet I feel assured you will on all occasions acquit yourselves with gallantry. I wish you, gentlemen, what every true British soldier looks for—your enemy in front, a fair field and no favour, and the result, I have no doubt, will be glorious to yourselves and your gallant regiment, a regiment, Major Jackson, second to none in the service.'

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The Grenadier company then wheeled back on their left by sub-divisions and, having opened ranks, received the new colours, the band playing the National Anthem. They then took the colours to the right of the regiment, the band playing the 'British Grenadiers', on arriving at which place the band company and colours wheeled round, halted and took open order.

The colours were now trooped down the front of the 25th Regiment, band in front, the new colours being dropped to the old on passing them, and moved to the left, when they filed between the ranks and proceeded to take up their former position. The Light Company then advanced, and, having wheeled forward by sub-divisions to the right, marched to the centre of the regiment, where they received the old colours with a salute. A salute was then given them by the whole Brigade. They were then marched off by the Light Company band playing 'Auld Lang Syne', and handed over to a guard ready to receive them. The Light Company having returned to its proper position, the new colours were escorted to the centre of the regiment, where they took their place (under a salute from the Brigade) in the line of officers. The Grenadier company having returned to its place in line, and ranks being closed, the Brigade broke into open column, right in front, and marched past in review order.

The old colours were finally deposited over the memorial in St. Mary's Church, Poona, which was set up in the north aisle of the church, bearing the following inscription :[1]

> THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY THE OFFICERS OF THE 25TH REGIMENT, BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY, AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT TO THE MEMORY OF THEIR BROTHER OFFICERS.
>
> LIEUT. CHARLES LODGE, WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION NEAR KOTROO, CUTCH GANDAVA, ON THE 1ST DECEMBER, 1840.
>
> CAPTAIN CHARLES C. REBENACK, WHO DIED OF FEVER AT KOTROO ON THE 4TH JUNE, 1841.

[1] A similar tablet was placed in the Afghan Memorial Church, Colaba.

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SHOULDER-PLATE OF THE COLOUR-BELT OF THE 25TH REGIMENT, BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY

It was in use during the Indian Mutiny.

Presented to the R.U.S.I. Museum by Colonel Wm. Plomer, late 87th R.I. Fusiliers

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ENSIGN JOHN BROWNE, WHO WAS KILLED BY ACCIDENT AT KURRACHI ON THE 31ST JULY, 1841.

LIEUT. WILLIAM B. SHOBRICK, WHO DIED AT DADUR ON THE 4TH NOVEMBER, 1841, OF FEVER CONTRACTED AT KHELUT.

ENSIGN DANIEL BOURCHIER, WHO DIED AT SUKKUR OF FEVER, 26TH NOVEMBER, 1841.

MAJOR HENRY C. TEASDALE, WHO FELL IN FRONT OF THE COLOURS, WHEN IN COMMAND OF THE REGIMENT, AT THE BATTLE OF MEEANEE, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1843.

LIEUT. ANDREW J. THOMSON, WHO DIED IN BOMBAY ON THE 30TH NOVEMBER, 1843, OF ILLNESS CONTRACTED IN SCINDE.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II

THE MONUMENTS ON THE SIND BATTLEFIELDS

At Meeanee is a stone obelisk situated in a small garden, bearing this inscription:

ERECTED BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. J. NAPIER, G.C.B., AND THE OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY UNDER HIS COMMAND IN MEMORY OF THEIR COMRADES WHO FELL IN THE BATTLES OF THE 17TH FEBRUARY AND 24TH MARCH, 1843, FOUGHT WITH AMEERS OF SIND.

25TH REGIMENT, BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY

Major H. C. Teasdale, Havildars Bekum Tiwari, Luximon Jadu, Kundu Sindia, Privates Loochun Bhowani Singh 1st, Lalla Ahir, Bhowani Singh 2nd, Purtant Singh, Bhanuji Purrut, Reekee Passi, Gunnu Mungakar, Gunia Row, Se . . . in Dubay, Essoo Sotum, Nhagu Guicowar, Bhawanidin Cunbi, Pandu Sitga, Suckoji Thali, Cassi Chowan, Isram Sitga, Jednack Sabnack, Purun Singh, Rutum Nanah, and Gopal Singh.[1]

[1] This list is of singular interest, showing the caste composition of the Bombay Army in pre-Mutiny days. Nos. 1 and 11 of the Indian names are Pardeshi Brahmans. Nos. 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 are Marathas. Nos. 4, 6, 20, 22 are Rajputs. The rest are Mahars, Chamars and other low-castes. The monument at Koregaon is equally illuminating,

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There is a similar monument on the battlefield of Dubba, but no names are given. The only reference to the 25th is

25TH REGIMENT NATIVE INFANTRY . . . 3.

In the magazine enclosure of the Hyderabad Fort is an interesting tomb, bearing the following inscription:

> THE MONUMENT MARKS THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF ONE OF THE AMEER'S SOLDIERS, WHO WAS KILLED IN THE BATTLE OF HYDERABAD WHILST BRAVELY FIGHTING THE GUN PLACED OVER HIS TOMB.

Speaking of Meeanee, General Marston says, 'The next day we buried our dead in a deep trench dug in the form of a square. We ranged the poor fellows there in rows and buried them on the battlefield.' The obelisk marks the site of this great grave.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER II

The voluminous literature on Napier's campaign in Sind, as controversial as it is endless, is conveniently summarized in *Sir Charles Napier*, by Dr. T. Rice Holmes (Cambridge, 1925), an excellent work, which corrects the numerous errors of *The Conquest of Scinde*, by Sir W. Napier (London 1845). Appendices M and P, on the battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad, are particularly valuable. *A History of the British Army*, by the Hon. J. W. Fortescue vol. xii (London, 1927), contains a full account of the campaign and a critical examination of Napier's tactics. *The Indian Command of Sir C. J. Napier*, by J. Mawson (Calcutta, 1851), contains useful documents, and I have been most kindly given access to unpublished papers of the late Major-General C. E. Marston, by his son, Mr. C. S. Marston. The Regimental Records of the 25th Regiment, and also of the 22nd European Regiment (now the 1st Bn. Cheshire Regiment) contain much new and valuable information. Carlyle's remark, that every living Englishman would be better for reading Sir William's book on his brother's exploits, is still true, if it is read *cum grano*. For Sind, the best authorities are Sir R. Burton's three volumes, and the *Sind Gazetteer* by E. H. Aitkin.

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THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-8

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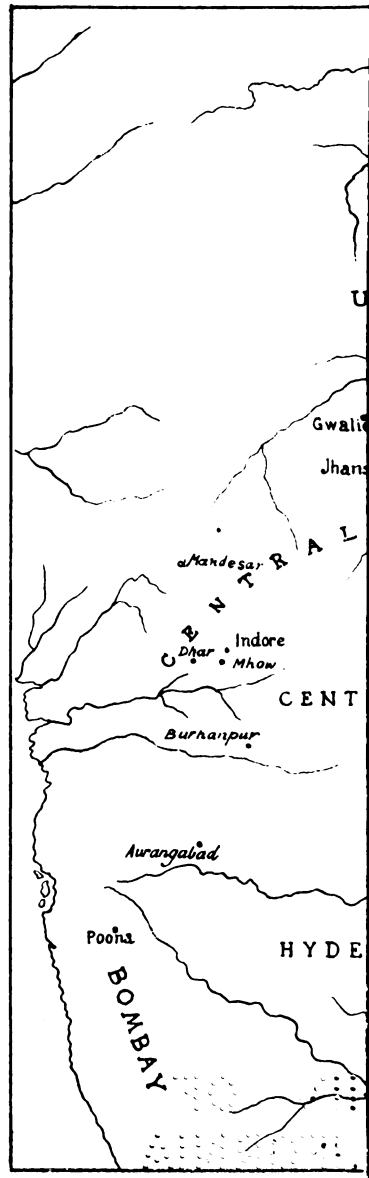

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CHAPTER III

THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857–8

THE Mutiny, we are told by no less an authority than John Lawrence, was caused by 'the cartridge affair and nothing else'. But this is a every shallow reading of the situation. Lord Dalhousie's forward policy had gone too fast for conservative India; by the ruthless application of the doctrine of lapse (that is, the refusal to allow adoption in the case of the failure of natural heirs to an Indian ruler) he had rendered the Indian princes intensely sullen and suspicious. As a climax to this came the annexation of Oudh. Of the ghastly misrule in Oudh there can be no doubt; but Indian standards of government are not those of the west, and, as Sleeman pointed out, reforms could have been easily enforced without resorting to annexation or confiscation. This district was the great recruiting-ground of the Company's forces: almost all the sepoys in the Bengal Army, and a certain proportion of those in Bombay, belonged to Oudh.[1] The Indian looks upon his hereditary ruler with an almost religious reverence, which is very little affected by the goodness or badness of his rule; and when the sepoys learnt that the kings of Oudh had been deprived of their ancestral rights, the discontent was widespread and deep. This affected most strongly the Mahommedans, who began to look once more to the poor phantom, who sat on the throne of the Padshahs of Delhi, to redress their wrongs; but, unluckily, the Hindus had an equally powerful focus for their grievances near at hand, for at Bithur, in Oudh, lived Dondu Pant, familiarly known as the Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa of Poona. On no one had the hand of Dalhousie fallen more heavily than on

[1] In 1857 there were over 40,000 sepoys from Oudh in the army.

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the Marathas. Jhansi, Nagpur, and even the little kingdom of Satara, governed by the descendants of the great Sivaji, had all been annexed under the 'lapse' doctrine; and, to crown all this, when, in 1852, Bajirao Peshwa died, the extravagant pension granted to him in 1818 was discontinued to his son.

Equally unsatisfactory was the state of the Company's army. The proportion of European to Indian soldiers (38,000 to 200,000) was far too low. Great arsenals at Delhi and Allahabad were in the hands of sepoy guards. When Napier returned to India as Commander-in-Chief in 1849, he found the *morale*, both of officers and men, to be deplorable; but his vigorous attempts to revive the old spirit of discipline only brought a severe rap on the knuckles from Dalhousie, which resulted in Napier's resignation.[1] During the year and a half of Napier's regime, thirty-six officers of the Bengal establishment alone were tried by court-martial. Colonels of seventy years of age,[2] and subedars of fifty years' service, were common phenomena. The constant extension of our frontiers involved service in distant and unhealthy countries like Sind and Afghanistan, which was highly unpopular. Lord Canning tried to make service overseas compulsory for the Bengal Army as well as for Madras, and this, involving loss of caste for the sepoys employed, was greatly resented. But the greatest trouble of all was caused when the Panjab was annexed, as this meant that the field allowances, or *batta*, earned by service in a foreign country, were stopped. The sepoys were badly handled, now pampered, now bullied,

[1] History repeats itself, but in 1904 it was the Governor-General who suffered. Dalhousie complained of Napier's discourtesy, which was not unnatural, as Napier habitually spoke of him as 'a little pig', 'a little goose', 'vain as a pretty woman or any ugly man'. But this was Napier's usual method of conducting a controversy!

[2] General Wheeler, who commanded at Cawnpore, was 75. But this is nothing to the general, buried at Saugor, who died at the age of 80, 'in command of the Nerbudda Division of the Army.' Besides this, the best officers were taken away for civil employment.

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and mutinies or strikes for higher pay had already broken out among the 34th N.I. in 1844, the 22nd N.I. in 1849, the 66th N.I. in 1850, and the 38th N.I. in 1852. The situation was as explosive as an open powder-barrel; the 'greased cartridge' episode was only the crowning folly, the match which ignited the train. In 1849, Napier (not an easy man to daunt) was so impressed by the danger of the situation, that he restored the old pay and allowances on his own authority, and, when reprimanded by Lord Dalhousie, said that he had acted, for the safety of India, 'in a moment of great danger, surrounded by a hostile population, and with an army of upwards 40,000 men infected with a mutinous spirit.' To which Dalhousie replied, 'I wish to record my entire dissent from the statement that the army has been in mutiny and the Empire in danger.' *Quem Deus perdere vult, prius dementat.* On January 23rd, 1857, the troops at Dumdum refused the cartridges. On March 29th, a sepoy of the 34th N.I. cut down his adjutant on parade. On May 10th, a Sunday, the troops at Meerut broke out during evening service, killed their officers, and galloped down the Delhi road to the ancient capital of Hindustan. In a moment northern India was a 'sea of anarchy'. The Indian Mutiny had begun.

When the trouble broke out, Bombay was fortunate to have as its Governor Lord Elphinstone, whose energy, courage and resource were largely instrumental in saving the Empire in the crisis. He commandeered, on his own initiative, the P. & O. steamers in the harbour, and sent them off to Mauritius and the Cape to fetch troops. He ordered the Commissioner in Sind to send all available men from Karachi to the Panjab, and himself held up the regiments *en route* for Persia. As we have said before, the hand of Dalhousie had fallen heavily upon the Marathas, and, in addition to this, the 'Inam Commission',[1] which had lately made an exhaus-

[1] An *Inam* is a rent-free tenure of land. The titles were no doubt in many cases defective, but the procedure was highly impolitic and needlessly provocative.

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tive survey of the title deeds of all landowners in the Deccan and confiscated 20,000 estates, had caused widespread consternation. The Southern Maratha country was seething with discontent. At the end of July the 27th N.I. mutinied at Kolhapur, and Belgaum and Dharwar were only just saved from a similar fate; in the capital itself trouble was averted owing to the pluck of a police officer named Forjett.

We must now turn to the 25th, when revolt was spreading like a prairie fire from one regiment to the next, and their comrades all round them were being swept away in the conflagration. It will be always to the eternal honour of the 25th that not a sepoy in the whole battalion was affected.[1] The spirit which had brought them to the side of the British Raj at Kirkee, and which had animated them throughout the Sind campaign, burned brightly in their breasts—'a splendid regiment' the historian of the Mutiny calls them, 'often to be mentioned, and always with honour.'

> Amid the faithless, faithful only they,
> Amid the innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> Their loyalty they kept, their love, their zeal.

At the end of 1856, one of our 'small wars', soon to be forgotten in the face of more stirring events, had broken out in Persia. The 25th was at Ahmedabad at the time, and the Light Company was despatched to join the Light Battalion at Bushire. It was present at the bloodless capture of Mohamrah; the rest of the battalion were actually at sea to join their comrades when peace was declared and they were recalled. Hence, by a lucky coincidence, the outbreak of the storm found the 25th at Poona. Lord Elphinstone's first idea was to prevent the mutineers of Central India from co-operating with their sympathizers in the Deccan, and for this purpose he mobilized all available troops to form a Field Force,

[1] The 25th was actually the first sepoy regiment to engage the mutineers.

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whose duty was to keep open the road to Agra, and to hold the line of the Nerbudda river. But, alas, the number of trustworthy men available was all too few, and the column, under General Woodburn, consisted only of the 25th, a battery of horse artillery, and five troops of the 14th Light Dragoons. On the 8th of June they were inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Somerset, and immediately afterwards took the field. Their first destination was Aurangabad, where the Hyderabad contingent was showing signs of disaffection. The distance, 138 miles, was covered in fifteen days, and the rebels were promptly disarmed and chastised. General Woodburn having gone sick, Major Follett[1] of the 25th took command of the force, which was presently merged into a larger column under Colonel Stuart. This force pushed on to Asirgarh and Burhanpur, where it disarmed and punished portions of the 6th Gwalior contingent, and then (August 2nd) proceeded to the relief of the garrison at Mhow, which, under Captain Hungerford, R.A., had made a gallant defence against overwhelming forces of mutineers, consisting of the 1st Light Cavalry and the 23rd N.I., reinforced by disaffected troops from Indore.

The column now became part of the Malwa Field force under Colonel Mortimer Durand, Agent to the Governor-General at Indore. Durand decided that his first duty was to strike a blow at the strongholds of the rebels in western Malwa, and for this purpose he set out to attack the fortress of Dhar. The Raja of Dhar, a Maratha lad only thirteen years old, was in the hands of his Darbar, which, headed by his mother and uncle, and a minister of the name of Ramchandra Bapuji, had decided to throw in its lot with the mutineers, and, for this purpose, had enlisted a large number of Afghan and Arab mercenaries. On arriving in sight of Dhar, the column was attacked on October 22nd by these Arabs, supported by three

[1] He died of cholera on July 20th, near Asirgarh.

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field guns; but the 25th, led by Major Robertson, charged the guns, captured them and turned them on the enemy. The fort was now closely invested; the rebels were driven inside in a series of sharp skirmishes, and the breaching batteries got to work against the walls. On October 31st the breach was pronounced to be practicable, and before dawn the storming columns had formed up, when the cry arose that the enemy were evacuating the city! This proved to be only too true. In the night they had slipped past our pickets unobserved, and were now, unfortunately, out of range. The victorious troops entered the town and hoisted the British flag over the citadel; the fort was demolished, and set on fire; and the troops moved off under the glaring light of the conflagration. The Malwa Field Force received the congratulations of the Commander-in-Chief for this brilliant little operation, and the 25th were proud to receive the following special message:

'His Excellency has also been requested by the Right Hon'ble the Governor in Council to convey to Major Robertson and the 25th Regiment N.I. the approbation of Government, and you will accordingly cause the sentiments of His Lordship to be made known by publishing this communication in your Brigade Orders.'

But the work of the Malwa Field Force was by no means over. As we have seen, the defenders of Dhar unfortunately got away unscathed, and had fallen back on the city of Mandesar, where they were strongly reinforced by the Neemuch mutineers. Durand followed hard at their heels. He crossed the Chambal river, fortunately without opposition, and on November 23rd, when the men were at their breakfast, a message arrived from the pickets that they were in contact with the enemy. A cavalry reconnaissance discovered a large body, strongly posted in the village of Goraria, across the Neemuch road. The Field Force at once formed into

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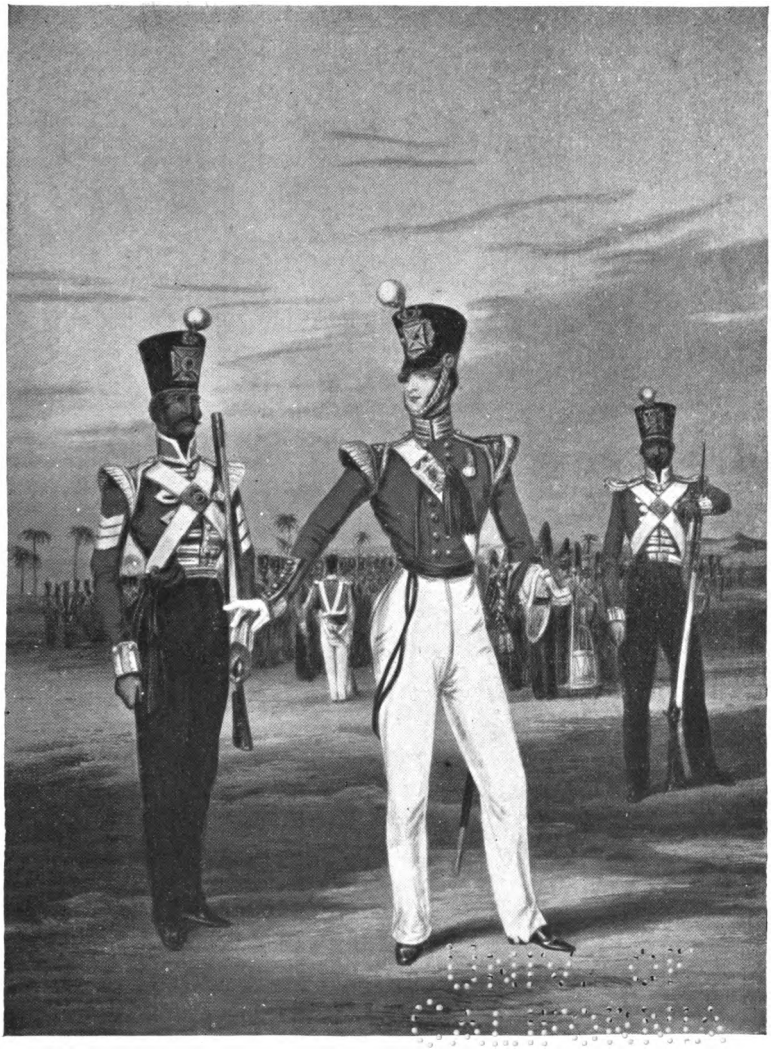

TYPES OF THE BOMBAY ARMY, *circa* 1857—HAVILDAR, OFFICER, SEPOY

By the courtesy of the Parker Gallery

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line, the 25th leading, and, supported by their artillery, advanced under heavy fire. During the advance, a very brave action was performed by a sepoy of the regiment, Private Dariyal Singh. He rushed out and bayoneted a fanatic, armed with a sword and spear, in the act of cutting down his commanding officer, Major Robertson, who was a conspicuous target, as, mounted upon his charger, he led the Grenadier company to the attack. For this act of gallantry, Major Robertson promoted him to the rank of Lance-Naik on the spot, laying his sword on his shoulder. Severe hand-to-hand fighting now took place in the outskirts of the village, and as little progress had been made, the troops were withdrawn at nightfall, and a strong chain of pickets thrown out to prevent the enemy from escaping. Attempts to break out were made from time to time during the hours of darkness, but were invariably frustrated by the vigilance of the 25th, who opened fire whenever a movement was observed. The officer in charge of the picket-line wrote next day to Major Robertson, commending in high terms the behaviour of the 25th. 'The men, of their own accord,' he says, 'agreed to keep at the kneeling position the whole night, so as to be ready to jump up at once at the approach of the enemy. . . . They most kindly handed over their cloaks, and such articles as they could spare, to the thirteen men of H.M.'s 86th Regiment[1] who were with me, and were without any covering, they themselves being contented with throwing some of their bedding over their shoulders.' The next day, after a tremendous pounding by the artillery, the village was triumphantly stormed by the 25th at the point of the bayonet, and the stubborn defenders completely annihilated. After this, Mandesar was captured without difficulty on November 26th. On the following day Major Robertson issued an order congratulating the regiment on their achievement.

'Soldiers and officers of the 25th!' he writes, 'when

[1] Now the 2nd Bn., Royal Ulster Rifles.

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we unfurled our colours on the 23rd instant, and were about to advance on the enemy, I knew that such noble soldiers as I have the honour to command required only to have uttered to them the talismanic words, "Meeanee" and "Hyderabad," and I, accordingly, simply begged you to remember the two victories in which the regiment had taken so proud a part. Well did you attend to my injunctions, and most glorious have been the results. Your bravery has been conspicuous, and the whole force bears willing testimony to it, for your praise is in everyone's mouth. I bitterly regret the loss of many fine fellows who were killed or who have since died of their wounds; many of them bore the highest character, and, if spared, must have risen to distinction in the regiment. Their memory will long be cherished by us, their sorrowing brother-soldiers.[1]

'I warmly thank you, officers and men, for your untiring exertions, and I am sure I shall not be thought to detract from the merit of any one of you, and that I shall not raise a feeling of jealousy in any heart, if I say that to Captain Little, especially, I am under great obligations for his valuable and energetic assistance, and that I wish any mention made of him by me could obtain for him the reward of superior rank he so well deserves.' 'In the operations of the two days,' the same officer states in a report on the battle, 'nothing could exceed the splendid behaviour of the officers and men of the 25th. They were foremost on every occasion. The men of the 86th, too, worked right well, and with such men as these two regiments are composed of, I would undertake any task that it is in the power of infantry to accomplish; I cannot but be most proud of my own regiment, which has so nobly maintained its high reputation. All did their duty energetically and zealously.'

After the decisive actions at Dhar and Mandesar, the

[1] The casualties, out of 300 men and 9 officers who went into action, were:—Killed: 6 privates; wounded: 4 British officers, 1 native officer, 7 N.C.O.'s and 18 privates; total, 36.

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rebellion in western Malwa was virtually stamped out. The enemy would no longer stand up to face British troops in the field; the garrison towns had been relieved, and the mutineers disarmed and punished. Above all, the line of the Nerbudda had been held, and the mutineers in Malwa had been prevented from joining hands with their sympathizers in the Deccan. Durand at last felt himself at liberty to turn his attention to Indore. Here he arrived on January 1st, 1858. The city was invested; the rebels were disarmed, and the Maharaja, in an interview with Colonel Durand, expressed his contrition for events over which, there is reason to believe, he was unable to exercise any effective control. The Malwa Field Force had now successfully accomplished its objects and was disbanded, and the 25th returned to Mhow for a short rest, in order to refit. A letter was received, on December 30th, from the Commander-in-Chief, thanking all ranks for the distinguished services of the Force, adding that 'their gallant conduct has been specially brought to the notice of the Right Hon'ble the Governor in Council, with the expression of the hope of the Commander-in-Chief that the good service performed by them between the 21st and 24th November may meet with the rewards which their conduct is so deserving of.' 'I am desired to add,' the letter concludes, 'that, taking into consideration the gallant behaviour of the 25th N.I., the Commander-in-Chief has solicited that some special mark of favour be conferred on the regiment, in token of the approbation of Government.'

But the breathing space afforded to the 25th was short. A force, termed the Central India Field Force, was now being organized, under a distinguished soldier, General Sir Hugh Rose, to sweep through Central India, in co-operation with a similar force, composed of units from the Madras Army, under General Whitlock. Sir Hugh Rose's column was based on Mhow, and its final objective was the great fortress of Jhansi. It was composed of two brigades: the first, under Brigadier-General C. S. Stuart, of the Bombay Army,

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consisted of the 25th, their old comrades, the 86th European Regiment, an infantry regiment of the Hyderabad contingent, a squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons, a troop of the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, two cavalry regiments of the Hyderabad contingent, and three light field batteries. The first brigade left Mhow on January 10th, its immediate objective being Chanderi, a famous stronghold in the Gwalior State. On March 5th the force was approaching Chanderi along a road which ran, first through dense jungle, and then up a narrow pass between high hills, at the further end of which was a barricade. This pass, named the Khatti Ghatti, was seized by Captain Little with the 25th and an advanced post established there. The country in front of Chanderi was so rough that it was ten days before the breaching batteries could be got to work; meanwhile, Captain Little reported a bold and successful reconnaissance carried out by Havildar Rumbaz Khan and Private Shaikh Lal, of the Grenadier company, who, dressed in dark clothes and wearing no shoes, crept up to the wall covering the re-entrant angle opposite their post with great daring, and brought back information of the utmost value for the subsequent assault. On the 15th the breach was pronounced to be practicable, and the assault was arranged for daybreak on the 17th. The storming parties were arranged as follows: The right, or main, attack, consisting of an advance party, a column of assault carrying ladders and other implements, and a reserve, 1,300 in all, were to storm the breach; while the left attack, under Captain Little, consisting of 100 men of the 25th, and an equal number of the 86th, supported by 50 men of the Bombay Sappers and Miners, were to escalade the wall opposite their post. The signal for the assault was to be a salvo fired from every gun in the batteries, which had been carefully trained on the head of the breach. The fateful moment arrived. The troops had formed up in perfect silence, covered by the darkness, in rear of the breaching batteries. At 5 a.m., with a deafening roar, every gun opened fire, and the advance party,

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consisting of 50 men of the 86th and 50 of the 25th, rushed the breach with loud cheers, driving the enemy in front of them. The column of assault followed hard at their heels, and the whole brigade then deployed and swept down the plateau of the fort. Meanwhile, Captain Little's party were actively co-operating on the left. Daybreak found them advancing stealthily towards the wall which they had reconnoitred two nights previously, and they had just reached it, when the signal for the assault was fired. 'I saw, to my joy,' Captain Little says in his report, 'that the wall was broken down, and nothing except very rugged and brushy ground lay between us and the wall of the fort itself. Hearing the cheers of the column assaulting at the breach, with a yell we charged, and in a few minutes many of us had, with each other's assistance, without the aid of the ladders, scaled the wall. The ladders were, however, soon up, and the remainder of the detachment also gained the fort. Having taken the Round Bastion on our left, we swept to our right, and, driving the enemy before us, carried with slight opposition the next. Seeing the next (or Corner Bastion as I have before called it) not taken by our troops, I could not resist the temptation, though exceeding the orders I had received; so, getting my men together, with a rush the object was soon gained. We then advanced towards the palace (taking the gateway on our left) and were joined by the whole assaulting force.' The enemy now fled precipitately, and Chanderi, with all its guns, treasure, and stores of grain, fell into the hands of the British. Their total casualties were 29, including two officers. In his report to the Commander-in-Chief, General Stuart states that: 'Nothing could exceed the brilliant courage displayed by both officers and men of H.M.'s 86th Regiment and the 25th Regiment N.I. Colonel Sowth, commanding the former, and Major Robertson, the latter regiment, led their men in the most gallant manner, and I felt that, with such troops and so commanded, success, however we might be opposed, was certain. I cannot conclude this despatch

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without bringing to the notice of the Major-General how much I am indebted to Captain Little, 25th Regiment N.I., and the officers and men who accompanied him, for the very spirited and successful assault by escalade on the Fort of Chanderi, which I have called the Left Attack.'

Sir Hugh Rose's army now proceeded to advance upon its main objective, the great fortress of Jhansi. Jhansi was one of those Maratha states which, in 1853, had been confiscated by Lord Dalhousie, under the pretext that Raja Gangadharrao had died without heirs. In vain the Rani, a high-spirited and courageous woman, pleaded the past services of her state to the British; the Governor-General was adamant. Beside herself with rage, the Rani nursed her grievances for four years; then, at the outbreak of the Mutiny in the north, she savagely put to the sword all the British in the cantonments, and joined the great rebellion. Jhansi is a formidable stronghold. The fortress, standing on a high rock, its guns commanding the surrounding country, is built of solid granite; around it lies the city, also enclosed by strongly fortified walls. In order to attack the inner fortress the city must first be captured. To make the position of the besieging force more difficult, the Rani had laid waste the surrounding country for many miles. Her garrison consisted of over 11,000 men.

On March 25th the British guns opened fire. The city batteries replied hotly, and little or no progress had been made by the end of the month, when alarming news arrived: Tantia Topi was advancing, with 22,000 men and 28 guns, to the relief of the city! Sir Hugh Rose was in danger of being caught in a trap; if he raised the siege in order to attack his new foe, the army in Jhansi would take him in rear. Leaving, therefore, the bulk of his army to contain the city, he marched with only 1,500 men to the Betwa river to meet Tantia Topi's 22,000. This desperate move was completely successful; Tantia Topi was decisively defeated, and fell back in disorder upon

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JHANSI FORT

Photograph from the Central Publicity Bureau, Indian State Railways

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Kalpi, losing all his guns.[1] Of these, six fell to the share of the 25th, who, with the 86th, formed the skirmishing line. The soldiers returned, triumphant but exhausted, to camp, having been under arms continuously from 6 p.m. on March 31st until 2 p.m. on April 1st, marching 20 miles, and fighting a pitched battle. The casualties from sunstroke were numerous: one of the sufferers was Lt.-Colonel Robertson, the Commanding Officer of the 25th, who had been promoted a week previously for services in the field. Lieut. Mills was recommended for the V.C. for gallantry under fire.

Jhansi was now a doomed city. On April 3rd the storming columns advanced at dawn; the 86th and 25th, forming the left attack, crowned the breaches in gallant style, bayoneting their opponents, and went to the help of the right attack, which was vainly endeavouring to scale the walls under a cruel fire. The besiegers now formed line, and advanced towards the palace, fighting their way foot by foot through the tortuous labyrinths of the town. The palace was taken after a fierce tussle, the rebels being driven from room to room at the point of the bayonet. The fort, however, still held out, and April 4th was spent in shelling it, the guns from the towers replying vigorously. On the next morning, however, silence reigned. Reconnoitring patrols found that the Rani and the remnant of her followers had slipped away, under cover of darkness, to join Tantia Topi at Kalpi. The rebel standard was torn down,[2] and the Union Jack hoisted, amid the booming of guns and the cheers of the troops. Our total losses were 36 officers and 307 men; the enemy left 1,000 dead in Jhansi alone. Lieut. Mills, Captain Little and Lieut. Forbes were recommended for the V.C., for rescuing a man of the 86th under heavy fire. Lt.-Colonel Robertson was

[1] He covered his retreat by firing the jungle, which checked the pursuers.

[2] It now adorns the walls of the 125th mess.

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now made Commandant of Jhansi, and the force had ten days in which to recoup and refit after their exertions. The next move was against Kalpi, the arsenal of the rebels, where Tantia Topi, the Rani, and the Rao Saheb (the nephew of the Nana Saheb), having been recently joined by the Nawab of Banda, had rallied their men for a last stand. The troops were once more on the move, despite the blinding sun, on April 19th; and on May 2nd, Captain Little and 50 men of the 25th took part in the storming of the fortress of Lohari. Fighting was now almost continuous. The enemy disputed almost every mile of the advance, and the heat was terrific; at one time 200 men of the regiment were simultaneously *hors de combat* from sunstroke.[1] There was a particularly desperate engagement on May 2nd at Kunch, where the 25th, advancing in open order, their flanks protected by guns and cavalry, cleared a succession of woods, temples and walled gardens, while their old comrades-in-arms, the 86th, executed a successful turning movement. The British were now closing in upon Kalpi, but the troops were in a sorry plight, exhausted by long marches, daily skirmishing, and prostrated by the heat. The country in front of Kalpi, a network of ravines, nullahs and jungle, of which the enemy knew every inch, was of the most difficult, and even heartbreaking, character for an attacking force under these trying conditions.

On May 22nd the enemy had sworn to drive the British into the Jumna. At dawn large bodies were massing opposite our lines, and at 9 a.m. the brigade was turned out. The attack was pressed home and the situation became serious. 'Nearly 400 of my regiment,' writes an officer of the 86th, 'were *hors de combat*; the native regiment[2] was not much better, and thousands of yelling savages were pressing on, a river in our rear. . . .

[1] On May 20th, out of a party of 35 dragoons on convoy duty, 18 went down at one time from this cause.

[2] The 25th.

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The enemy were within twenty yards of our battery and outpost tents, the latter full of men down with sunstroke. Another quarter of an hour, and there would have been a massacre.'

The mutineers, getting close up to the line under heavy fire, at one time begged the sepoys to go over and join them, and at another, finding this method useless, indulged in the foulest abuse. The reply they received was a startling one: a hearty cheer, taken up along the whole line, and a determined charge, drove them back in disorder for about half a mile, dislodging them from the labyrinth of ravines which they had looked upon as an almost impregnable defence. The regiment returned to camp at 3 p.m., having behaved most nobly in one of the most harassing days in the whole campaign; their losses were 9 men killed, and 1 officer and 10 men wounded. On the following morning Kalpi was found to be evacuated. The enemy's arsenal, with its vast reserves of ammunition and arms, and its workshops and foundries, fell into our hands.

The campaign in Central India now appeared to be over. Arrangements were being made to send the troops to a cooler climate to recuperate after their exertions, and Sir Hugh Rose had applied for sick leave, when suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came the most startling tidings. After her defeat, the Rani of Jhansi had determined on a last desperate bid for victory. Her plan was this. In the heart of Central India lay the vast mediæval fortress of Gwalior. The Maharaja Sindia, descendant of the great Mahadji, had, almost alone among the Maratha princes, remained loyal to the British. The Rani's scheme was to collect every man she could, and swoop down suddenly on Gwalior, trusting to the Maratha army to go over to her side. It was a stroke of genius, and a completely successful one. With dramatic suddenness, the Rani swept down upon Gwalior, appearing outside its walls on June 1st. The unfortunate Maharaja, who promptly took the field against her, was completely defeated, his men going over *en masse* to the

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enemy, and had to flee for his life to Agra. The Rani entered the fortress in triumph, took possession of the treasury and arsenal, proclaimed the Nana Saheb as Peshwa, and set to work to organize her forces for a fresh campaign. When the news reached Sir Hugh Rose, he knew that he must strike quickly. The monsoon was at hand. In a month the rivers would be impassable, and the 'black cotton soil' a swamp in which guns could not manœuvre. Once more the weary troops, about to rest after their labours, were called upon to take the road amid the blinding heat. It says more for them than any words can express that these orders were obeyed without a murmur. Setting out on June 6th, and making forced marches, in spite of a temperature rising at times to 130° F. in the shade, the army reached the outskirts of Gwalior ten days later. A series of sharp engagements, culminating in two very fiercely contested battles at Morar and Kotah-ki-Serai, had to be fought before the town could be invested. In the latter encounter the Rani lost her life. She was retiring fighting, at the head of her men, who were being hard pressed by the 8th Hussars. Suddenly her horse stumbled, and she was cut down by a trooper, who was ignorant of her sex and rank. Another Maratha princess, perhaps her half-sister, is said to have perished, sword in hand, at her side. So died the beautiful and valiant Lakshmi Bai, 'the bravest and best of the rebels,' as Sir Hugh Rose himself called her. It was the death she herself would have most desired. She was an able and resourceful commander in the field, and had she not been privy to the hideous massacre of eighty-five hapless English men, women and little children, whom her confederates butchered in cold blood, after inducing them to surrender by promises of honourable treatment, she would be entitled, along with that other great Maratha lady, Ahalyabai Holkar, to a niche among the heroines of Indian history. Step by step, the enemy contesting every foot of the ground with Rose's converging columns, the troops

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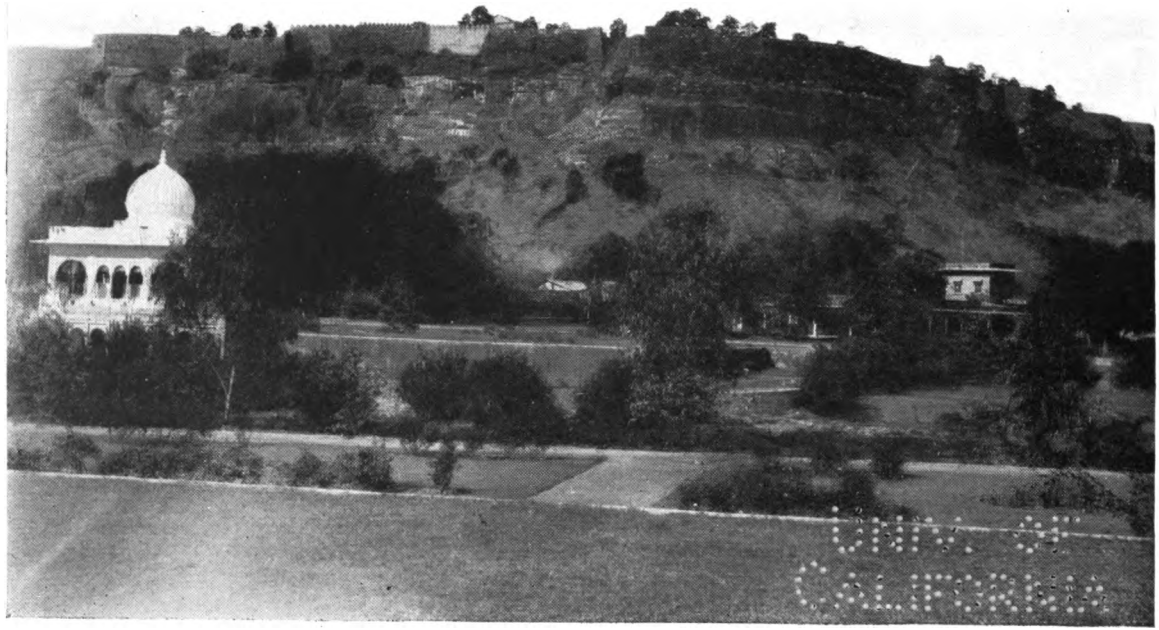

GWALIOR FORT

By the courtesy of Major-General Rajwade

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closed in, and by June 9th had occupied the *laskar* and palace, but the great rock fortress, grim and unapproachable, still towered defiantly above the surrounding buildings. But British valour rose to the height of the occasion. In the early morning of June 20th was enacted a little drama which has immortalized the 25th in the pages of history. On the previous night, Lieut. Rose, 25th Bombay N.I., was in command, with a detachment of his regiment, at the *kotwali*,[1] guarding the Alamgiri gate, the main exit on the north-east side. Judging from the sounds of revelry within that the gate was unguarded, Rose proposed to a brother officer, Lieut. Waller, who commanded another picket of the same regiment near him, that they should attempt to capture the fortress with their joint parties, urging that if the risk was great, the honour would be greater. Waller cheerfully assented, and the two officers sent for a blacksmith. They were also joined by the adjutant, Captain Plomer, who had come to see what was afoot. They crept up to the first gateway unseen; then the blacksmith, a powerful man, forced it open, and so with the other five gates that opposed their progress. By the time the sixth gate had been forced, the alarm had been given, and, when the assailants had reached the archway beyond the last gate, they were met by the fire of a gun which had been brought to bear upon them. Dashing onwards, unscathed by the fire, they were speedily engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with the garrison. The fight was desperate, but the gallantry of Rose and Waller and their men carried all before them. Rose especially distinguished himself. Just in the hour of victory, however, he was mortally wounded while searching for some enemy who were concealed in a house. The man who had fired the shot, a mutineer from Bareilly, then rushed out and cut him across the knee and wrist with a sword. By this time reinforcements were hurrying up, and the great fortress was

[1] Police station.

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ours.[1] For his part in this feat of arms, Waller was awarded a well-earned V.C. The same honour would have fallen to Rose, had he lived.

With the fall of their last great stronghold, organized resistance on the part of the rebels came to an end. But much hard work remained to be done. The Rani of Jhansi was dead, but Tantia Topi, the bravest and most resourceful of the rebel leaders now left, was still at large, and his followers were desperate men, fighting with the halter round their necks. The hardest part of the last Boer War was the hunting down of De Wet and his followers, after organized resistance had ceased. The same may be said of the pursuit of Tantia Topi.

After performing severe and harassing garrison duties in the captured city of Gwalior, the 25th, under Lt.-Colonel Robertson, formed part of Sir Robert Napier's column sent out to reduce the rebel, Man Singh, who had revolted against the Maharaja of Gwalior. He had seized the fort of Pauri, from which he was successfully dislodged on August 23rd, and a fortnight later his army was surprised and dispersed at Bijapur. The cordon was now, at long last, closing in upon the doomed and desperate remnant under Tantia Topi. Doubling like a hare, he tried to break through, first on one side and then on another, but everywhere he was repulsed. At one time he actually crossed the Nerbudda. Six months ago this move might have had the gravest consequences. But times had changed; people saw that the British were winning, and he met with a cool reception. Meanwhile, his confederate, Prince Firoz Shah, had been surprised

[1] Kaye and Malleson's, account (v, 159) is full of blunders. The episode was not the mad exploit there depicted. Lt.-Colonel Robertson, the C.O., had wind of it; and Captain Plomer (adjutant) joined the party. Rose was killed later than the first rush, while searching a house for concealed rebels. Waller did not cut down his assailant, though be wounded him with a musket-shot. The surprise was complete; besides Rose, only one man was killed and five wounded. (Notes kindly supplied by Col. W. Plomer, and Lt.-Colonel R. Waller, late 105th Mahrattas, sons of the officers concerned. Accounts in *Bombay Courier*, and in *Daily Telegraph*, June 22nd, 1928.)

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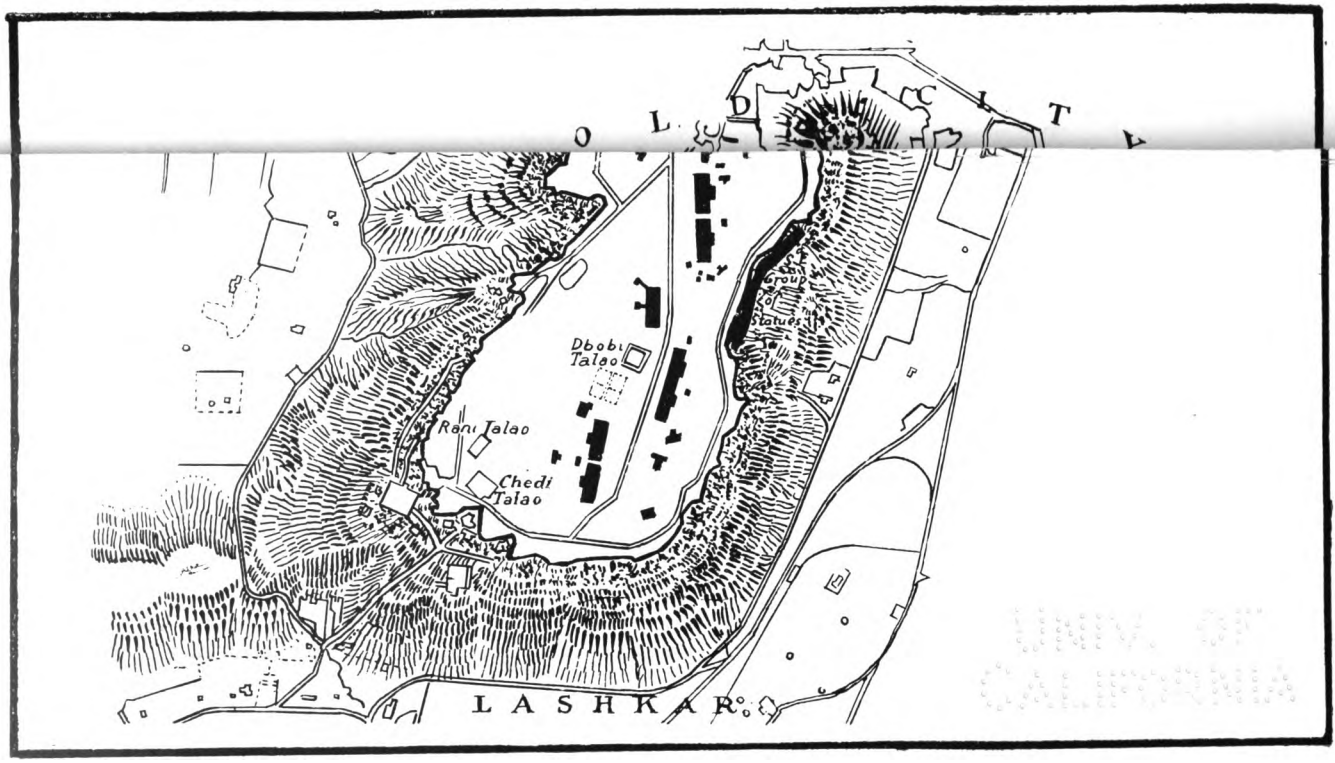

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and roughly handled by Captain W. Rice of the 25th near Guna. The end came on April 7th, 1859. Man Singh had surrendered to the British, and, as a price for his pardon, consented to betray his friend. At midnight this Judas guided a party of the 9th Bombay N.I. to a lonely spot in the heart of the Paron jungles, where the rebel leader, worn out with incessant fighting, lay sleeping heavily. He was roughly aroused, and started up to find himself surrounded by his enemies. Tantia Topi was carried to Sipri, where, on April 18th, after being tried by court-martial for waging war on the British Government, he paid the penalty for his crimes on the gallows. He died as coolly as he lived. To the last he maintained that he had acted in good faith as the servant of his master the Peshwa, and protested his innocence of any complicity in the massacres of Cawnpore. He and the Rani were the only leaders of genius on the side of the rebels.[1]

It will be remembered that, after the affair at Mandesar, the Commander-in-Chief had requested Government to confer upon the 25th some signal mark of favour for its gallant services. It had, therefore, been with intense pride that they learnt, on November 29th, 1858, that they had been constituted a LIGHT INFANTRY REGIMENT, under the following General Order:

'*Headquarters, Poona,*
'*29th November, 1858.*

'1. The Commander-in-Chief feels assured that the Army of this Presidency will read with much pleasure the Government General Order No. 1111, of the 15th instant, announcing that, for loyal and gallant conduct, the 25th Regiment N.I. has been constituted a Regiment of Light Infantry, in conformity with the suggestion of His Excellency and on the recommendation of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council.'

[1] Mention should also be made of Prince Firoz Shah, a brave soldier and fine horseman. He was never captured.

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'BY THE RT. HON'BLE THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL

'*Bombay Castle,*
'*15th November, 1858.*

'No. 1111 of 1858. The Right Hon'ble the Governor in Council has much pleasure in publishing to the Army the following extract of a Despatch No. 2, dated 22nd September last, from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India:

'Para. 1. "I have received your letter of the 19th July, 1858, addressed to the secret committee, reporting the loyal and gallant conduct of the 25th Regiment N.I. during the operations against the fort of Lohari, and throughout the campaign.

'Para. 2. "This communication having been considered in Council, I have now the satisfaction of authorizing you, in conformity with the suggestion of H.E. the Commander-in-Chief and the recommendation of your Government, to confer on the 25th Regiment N.I. the distinction of being constituted a Light Infantry Regiment, in testimony of the approbation of your Government, for the gallantry and devotion to the service so creditable to all ranks."'

With the final scene beneath the gallows at Sipri, the curtain rings down upon the bloody drama of the Indian Mutiny. The 25th now took their departure for Poona, and in April, 1859, reached once more the capital of the Deccan, whence, twenty-two months previously, they had set out on their long Odyssey. 'During that period,' said Sir Hugh Rose, in a message to his troops, which he caused to be read at the head of each regiment, 'you have marched more than 1,000 miles and taken 100 guns. You have forced your way through mountain passes and rivers; you have captured the strongest forts and have beaten the enemy, no matter what odds, wherever you could find him; you have restored extensive districts to Government, and peace and order now reign where, twelve months before, were tyranny and rebellion.

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You have done all this, and have never had a check. I thank you with all my sincerity for your devotion, your bravery, and your discipline. When first you marched, I told you that British soldiers had more than enough of courage for the work which was before you; but that courage without discipline was of no avail, and I exhorted you to let discipline be your watchword. You have attended to my words. In hardships, in temptation, and in danger, you have obeyed your commander, and have never left your ranks. You have fought against the strong, and have defended the rights of the weak and defenceless, of foes as well as friends. I have seen you, in the ardour of combat, preserve and place children out of harm's way. This is the discipline which has brought you from the shores of western India to the waters of the Jumna.'

As Lord Derby said, this little force of 4,500 men, including four sepoy battalions, 'in five months traversed 1,085 miles, crossed numerous large rivers, took upwards of 150 pieces of artillery, one entrenched camp, two fortified cities and two fortresses, all strongly defended, fought sixteen actions, captured twenty forts; and never sustained a check, against the most warlike and determined enemy, led by the most capable commanders then to be found in India.'

Striking testimonials from the officers commanding the brigades in which the 25th served were received when the hour of their departure approached. Brigadier-General Stuart bade them farewell in the following terms:

'On the departure of the 25th Regiment N.L.I., Brigadier Stuart has to express to the Officers, Native Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates his acknowledgments for their distinguished services during the time they have been under his command.

'They have fought side by side with the gallant 86th Regiment in storming the village of Goraria, the breach of Chanderi, in storming the town and clearing the

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streets of Jhansi, and in all the actions in which the Malwa F.F. and 1st Brigade Central India F.F. have been engaged.

'The 25th Regiment Bombay Light Infantry have well maintained the honour of the sepoys of the Bombay Army by their gallantry in action, devoted loyalty to the State, and cheerful endurance of much labour in assisting to construct field batteries and other heavy duties, when food was scarce, and, when obtained, time for preparing it could hardly be allowed.

'Brigadier Stuart begs to assure all ranks that he entertains the highest opinion of their soldierlike qualities, and that he will always feel the warmest and strongest interest in their future welfare.'

No less touching was the tribute paid to their good work in Sir R. Napier's farewell order to his troops:

'I cannot part with the troops now leaving the Gwalior Division, after having been associated with them during a year's eventful service, without a few words to convey to them my admiration and regard for their excellent and soldierlike conduct during the period they passed under my command.

'It would not become me to advert to the more prominent actions of the late campaign, for which the praise of the highest authority has already been awarded; but the services to which I will refer, and which the troops whom I now address were called upon to render when they scarcely had breathing time after their wonderful exertions at Jhansi, Kalpi, and Gwalior, though not of so showy and conspicuous a nature as the great battles of the campaign, yet frequently called for even more individual exercise of valour and endurance of hardship and exposure at the most inclement season of the year.

'I need not remind you of the state of the Gwalior Division when it came into our hands. The Jhansi district was overrun by many thousands of rebels, so that the British cantonments were the only parts of

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which we had undisputed possession. In the south of Gwalior a dangerous insurrection was eagerly watched by 7,000 of Sindia's disbanded troops. The return of the fugitive rebels under the Rao Sahib and Tantia Topi threatened to overturn every re-commencement of order, and at a later period the Oudh rebels, under Firoz Shah, evading many columns, swept through the country.

'To Colonel Robertson, 25th N.I., I am indebted for their services in every part of the district—in the ravines of the Chambal and the siege of Pauri, in the pursuit and destruction by Colonel Robertson of its fugitive garrison at Bijapur, and in the surprise of Firoz Shah in the jungles of Paron under Captain Rice.

'This incomplete notice but faintly records the valuable services which have been rendered to the State by you during the past year.

'It will always be a source of pride to me that I have commanded such troops, and to their Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Soldiers I bid a cordial and sincere farewell.'[1]

The return of the 25th to Poona had something of the nature of a triumphal progress. They were welcomed by the Commander-in-Chief in an appreciative letter:

'The 25th Native Infantry having returned to Poona after a protracted service beyond the limits of the Bombay Presidency, the Commander-in-Chief considers it a duty to publicly notice in General Orders his approbation of the conduct of this distinguished regiment.

'The regiment, as part of a Field Force under the command of Major-General Woodburn, C.B., left Poona on the 8th June, 1857, in the height of the monsoon, to aid in the suppression of mutiny at Aurangabad. It

[1] Extract from Division Orders, Camp Sironj, April 20th, 1859.

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subsequently moved on Malwa and shared in the privations, dangers and difficulties, as also in the honours, of the campaign in that district and in Central India, under the commands respectively of Brigadier C. S. Stuart, C.B., and Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, G.C.B.

'The sieges of Dhar, of Chanderi, and of Jhansi; the actions before Mandesar, of the Betwa, of Golauli, of Kalpi and of Gwalior, speak of the distinguished services of this regiment, which has never been in action without earning warm acknowledgments for its gallantry.

'The recent despatches of Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, G.C.B., testify that the 25th Regiment has abundantly added to the reputation it gained in Sind, at Meeanee and Hyderabad, under the late General Sir C. J. Napier, G.C.B.

'The first Native Infantry Regiment of the Bombay Army to meet the mutineers and rebels, its loyalty has never been questioned, while the forwardness of officers and men in action has gained the trust and confidence of the one and the fidelity and loyalty of the other.

'When the Headquarters are moved to Poona, it will afford the Commander-in-Chief much pleasure to see this regiment, that he may personally express his acknowledgments for the honourable services it has rendered to the State, and his thanks for the reputation it has gained for the army he has the honour to command.'[1]

The opportunity to which His Excellency refers was afforded to him on June 24th, when the civil and military population of Poona combined to organize an entertainment on a grand scale in honour of the return of their regiment to its station, covered with glory after all the triumphs they had won on the battlefield. But this is best described in the somewhat florid journalese of a contemporary periodical:

[1] General Order by the C.-in-C., H.Q., Mahableshwar, April 20th, 1859.

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'The entertainment given to the 25th N.L.I. at Poona, on the 24th June, was a very brilliant affair, and went off with great éclat. The committee of management spared no trouble in making the fête worthy of the occasion. The greatest credit is, therefore, due to them for the excellent manner in which the whole affair went off. The 24th ultimo was the day selected by the committee for the demonstration, and accordingly, in the morning, all the native ranks of the 25th, accompanied by the 6th Regiment, adjourned to a *tope* of mango trees about one and a half miles from camp, on the Sholapur road, where a *khana*, consisting of sweetmeats and other condiments, had been prepared, which must have given satisfaction, as sixteen hundredweights were consumed. After enjoying themselves there for some time, they returned in the afternoon to the lines. On the general parade-ground a splendid suite of tents had, by the kindness of the Quartermaster-General, been pitched for the reception of the ladies and gentlemen who had been invited to attend in the evening, to see the display of fireworks and the *nautch*, and also to attend the darbar. Accordingly, about eight o'clock, most of the inhabitants of Poona might have been seen proceeding towards the tents, which had been most tastefully and beautifully decorated with flags and wreaths of flowers, and were brilliantly lighted by handsome chandeliers and small lamps. At the entrance, which was most tastefully arranged with a pile of arms and drums on each side, were the different actions the 25th had been engaged in, and "Welcome, 25th" over the door. The whole was very well arranged, and bore witness to the good taste and indefatigable exertions of Lieut. Grant of the 6th Regiment, one of the committee. In front, close to the entrances, the fine Grenadier company of the 6th N.I., with the band of the 25th, were drawn up as a guard of honour. At about half-past eight o'clock the audience began to arrive, all present being in full dress, and shortly afterwards His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief made his appearance. He was

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conducted to the upper end of the tent; the Native Officers of the 25th were then brought forward, and each presented and introduced by name to His Excellency by their Commanding Officer, Major Little. The Native Officers of the other corps in Poona were next introduced, in a body, by their respective Commanding Officers, after which the company sat down, the Subedar Major being on the right, and the next senior Subedar of the 25th on the left hand of His Excellency. *Pansupari* and *attar* were then handed round, and the Native Officers decorated with garlands of flowers by the hands of the Adjutants and Quartermaster-Generals, who, as they presented each with a wreath, added some kind word, thus making the gift doubly valuable. After all this had been finished, His Excellency delivered the following speech, a translation of which was read by the interpreter, Captain Armstrong:

'"It is now two years since I selected the 25th Regiment to proceed as a part of the force, under command of General Woodburn, to Aurungabad, in consequence of the rebellion of the native troops in Hindustan and the Nizam's Territory. From that time, until the period of the return of the 25th Regiment last month, it has distinguished itself under its respective commanders, and has fought in every action until tranquillity was restored, obtaining for itself a high name; and it has been honoured by the Government with the distinction of being made a Light Infantry Regiment. I have not failed to mark the career of this regiment throughout all the important operations of the army. I now congratulate the regiment on its honourable conduct and signal success, and its happy return to the Presidency with so high a character of loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty."

'After the translation of the above had been read, the whole party adjourned outside to witness the display of fireworks, which were very good, and, on their completion, again returned to the tents to see the *nautch*. After all were seated the Havildar Major of the 25th

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Regiment came forward and delivered, on the part of the native ranks of the regiment, the following, a translation of which was handed to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief:

'"We trust we may be allowed to return our sincere thanks to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, to Sir Hugh Rose, and to the other Officers and Gentlemen who have so kindly given us this entertainment, and we eagerly seize this opportunity of expressing our admiration of the gallant deeds of H.M.'s 14th Dragoons, 86th Regiment and the 4th Company, 2nd Battalion, and Major Woolcombe's Battery of Artillery, with whom we were brigaded in Central India, and from whom we received so many acts of kindness. To General Sir Hugh Rose, and to Brigadier Sir Charles Stuart, we are particularly indebted for the glorious manner in which they commanded us, and for their consideration of us at all times. May prosperity and happiness attend them in every land and in every situation."

'At the conclusion of this address the *nautch* commenced, and after witnessing the same for a short time, most of the Europeans took their departure, the natives being left to enjoy themselves after their own fashion, which they seem to have done, as it did not cease till five o'clock. The band of the 25th Regiment was present during the early part of the evening, and contributed its share to the general enjoyment.'

At the same time, the people of Poona presented the regiment with a bugle major's staff, which had been bought by public subscription.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

Honours Won by the Regiment in the Mutiny Campaign

The following were the chief distinctions won by the regiment in the Mutiny campaign:

Brigadier-General G. H. Robertson, C.B., A.D.C. to H.M. the Queen. Commanded the regiment during the Mutiny with unswerv-

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ing faith in their loyalty, which trust was gloriously justified. (Died at Aden, January 10th, 1862.)

Brigadier-General A. R. Little (then Captain). This gallant officer was ever foremost and was constantly given tasks of special importance, which were invariably carried out faithfully and bravely. He afterwards commanded the regiment in Abyssinia. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross for services at Jhansi. (Retired, June 5th, 1880.)

Lieutenant Rose, killed at Gwalior, recommended for the Victoria Cross.

Lt.-Colonel W. F. F. Waller, V.C. Granted Victoria Cross for great gallantry at the capture by storm of the fortress of Gwalior (*London Gazette*, February 25th, 1862). He left the regiment in 1861, for political duty in the Southern Maratha Country, where he worked for many years, greatly loved and respected. He retired in 1883, and died February 28th, 1885, at Bath. His son, Lt.-Colonel R. Waller, commanded the 105th Maharatta L.I. in the Great War.

Lieutenant Mills, recommended for the Victoria Cross at Jhansi.

Lieutenant Forbes, recommended for the Victoria Cross at Jhansi.

Subedar Koonjul Singh, Jemadar Doorga Tewari, Havildar Punnoo Lodh: Promoted to these ranks from Havildar Major, Naik and Private, respectively, for their 'exemplary loyalty and fidelity to the State'. These Native Officers and Non-Commissioned Officer were afterwards made Members of the 3rd Class of the Order of Merit. At Gwalior they had denounced certain emissaries from the rebels, who were endeavouring to tamper with the loyalty of the regiment.

Private Dariyal Singh was promoted to Naik on the battlefield, for saving the life of his Commanding Officer before Goraria, November 23rd, 1857.

Private Goonajee Gowrah was promoted to Naik for distinguished conduct in action, September 14th, 1858.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER III

Besides the regimental records, I have consulted *The Revolt in Central India, 1857–9* (Intelligence Department); Sir Hugh Rose's despatches; *Central India during the Rebellion of 1857–8*, by Thos. Lowe (London, 1860); and *The Indian Mutiny*, by Sir G. W. Forrest. The best detailed account, in spite of inaccuracies, is in Kaye and Malleson, vol. v, and of the numerous general histories, the most trustworthy is that of Dr. Rice Holmes. I have also had the advantage of reading private diaries and other papers of officers of the regiment.

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THE ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION

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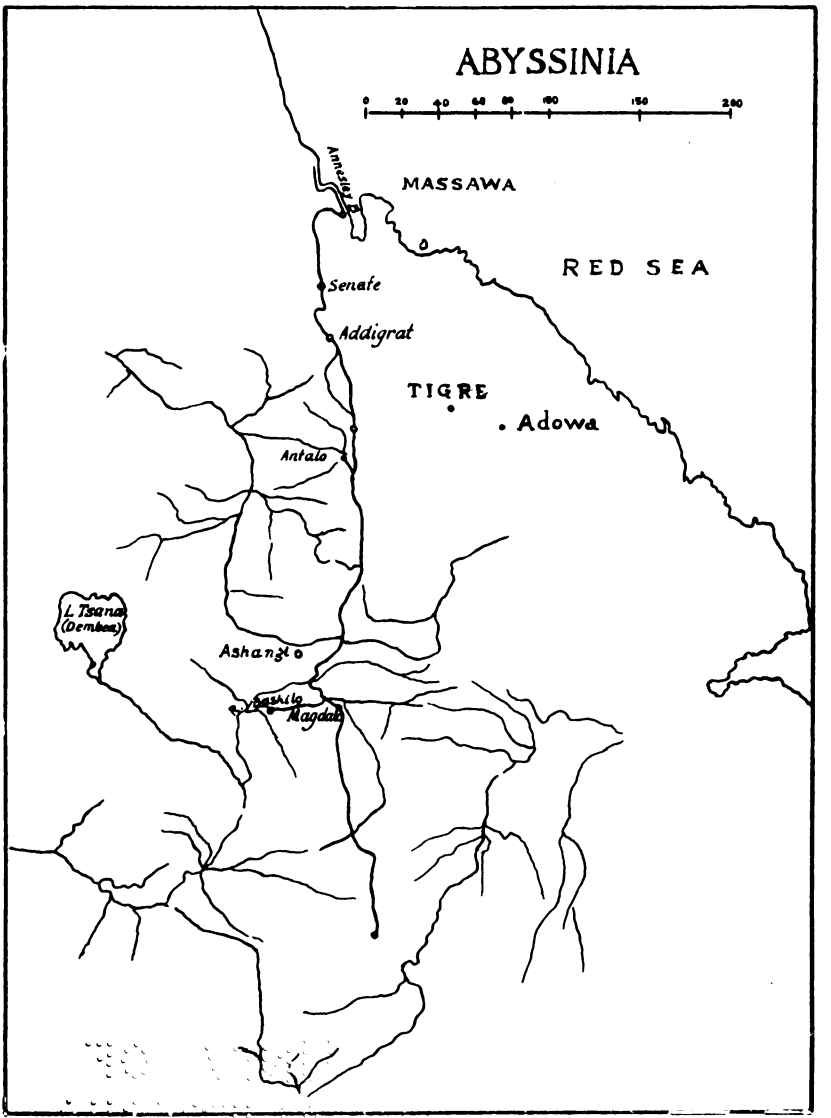

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CHAPTER IV

THE ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION

AFTER the terrific exertions of the Central India campaign, the 25th settled down to nearly a decade of the ordinary routine of the Bombay Army. In 1864 the so-called 'irregular' system of organization was introduced, which, in its early days, meant that the command of companies was in the hands of Indian officers, and only the commanding officer, the second in command, and regimental staff were British. This had the merit of economy, and it developed the initiative and responsibility of the Indian officers; moreover, it had been found to work well in the Mutiny. On January 1st of that year, the regiment was accordingly officered as under:

Commandant	.. ..	Colonel Stewart
Wing Officers	.. ..	Major Little, Captain Eales
Adjutant	.. ..	Lieut. Withers
Quartermaster	.. ..	Lieut. Stewart
'Doing Duty' Officer	.. ..	Lieut. Marshall

In 1867 broke out one of those countless 'little wars' which go so largely to make up the history of the Empire. Theodore, the ruling King of Abyssinia, was an oriental despot of the worst type, absurdly conceited of his power and prowess in the field, and given to outbursts of insane rage, during which he indulged in actions of fiendish cruelty. In 1863 Theodore had sent a letter to Queen Victoria by Mr. Cameron, the British Consul in Abyssinia, and, enraged at receiving no reply, he cast into prison Mr. Cameron and the whole of his suite, together with Messrs. Stern and Rosenthal, and a number of other European traders and missionaries, with their wives and families. The British Government now despatched a letter by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam to King Theodore, and negotiations for the release of the captives were proceeding, to all appearances, smoothly enough, when Theodore

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suddenly changed his mind, seized Mr. Rassam, threw the prisoners into chains, and sent them off to the fortress of Magdala, where they were most cruelly treated. They were tortured and half-starved, and lived in the utmost misery and daily fear of death until their rescue. Meanwhile, Theodore sent one Mr. Flad, a lay missionary and one of the prisoners, with an insolent letter, demanding artisans and machinery to be sent to him. The British Government, which behaved with great forbearance, returned Mr. Flad with the machinery and artisans and a courteous reply promising to hand them over in exchange for the prisoners. But Theodore once more changed his mind, and it became obvious that nothing but armed force would compel him to yield. It was determined, therefore, to despatch an army to Abyssinia for the purpose. Bombay was selected as the port of embarkation, and it was decided that a force of 10,800 men, with 14,500 followers, would be necessary. To transport this formidable little army overseas, land it on an inhospitable shore, and march it for over 400 miles through a hostile and little-known country, largely desert, over precipitous defiles and mountain paths, and attack a mountain stronghold held by a numerous enemy, was a task requiring no small powers of organization. General Sir Robert Napier, of Mutiny fame, was appointed in command, and a reconnoitring party under Colonel Merewether went in advance in September, 1867, to select landing places and anchorages, obtain the friendly co-operation of the local chiefs, and explore the passes leading into the interior. Colonel Merewether selected Mulkotto, on Annesley Bay, as the place for disembarkation. The Advanced Brigade, consisting of the 3rd Light Cavalry, the 10th Regiment N.I., and the Marine Battalion, together with units from the Sappers and Miners, artillery, ordnance and commissariat, landed at Annesley Bay at the end of October, and pushed on without delay for 63 miles through the Suru pass to occupy Senafé, which had been selected as the advanced base, and the principal storehouse for supplies and provisions, which, after being

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carried through the Kumayli pass, were destined to be sent on to the front. Early in January, 1868, Sir Robert Napier and his staff arrived at Annesley Bay, but, owing to the congestion at the base, an immediate advance was, for the time being, found to be impossible. The force now landed—two regiments of cavalry, four batteries of artillery, three battalions of engineers and ten infantry battalions—was a considerable one, and further reinforcements were on their way. The 25th Regiment, which left Bombay on December 17th, arrived at Annesley Bay on January 3rd, and comprised 680 officers and men. The following British officers were in charge:

Commandant	Lt.-Colonel Little
Second in Command ..	Major Fairbrother
Wing Commander.. ..	Lieut. Walter
Adjutant	Lieut. Withers
Quartermaster	Lieut. Hannell
Wing Subalterns	Lieuts. Poole and Mackinnon

Surgeon Straker and Asst. Surgeon Knapp

The regiment, on landing, was split up into detachments, which occupied posts on the Senafé road and assisted in road repairing and other duties. 'Nothing,' said Sir Robert Napier, in his report, 'could exceed the spirit with which these regiments worked in order to hasten the advance. Little could the mud-bespattered labourer with his basket be recognized as the smart sepoy of the parade-ground.' One great source of anxiety was removed when Kassai, the most powerful of Theodore's feudatories, the 'Tigré Prince,' as he was called, impressed by our forces, which he saw at a general review, decided to come over to our side.

It was arranged to present this prince with some smooth-bore muskets, and for this reason the 25th handed in their weapons, and received Enfield rifles in place of them. They reached Senafé on March 17th and set out for Adigrat on the 24th; on April 5th a wing, under Major Fairbrother, left for Antalo, where it rendered excellent assistance in convoying stores for the front.

The net was now closing in on Theodore. His

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army deserted in large numbers, and he was in great straits for food for his followers. He evacuated and burnt his capital at Debra Tabor and fell back upon Magdala, constructing excellent roads over the mountains for the passage of his artillery; but these proved to be his undoing, for the British utilized them in order to pursue him. The troops toiled day after day up the endless rocky defiles, along mountain tracks with yawning precipices threatening to engulf man and beast if they made the slighest slip; and sappers and pioneers worked incessantly, blasting rocks, bridging torrents, and hauling up guns and stores. On April 5th the force reached the Talanta plateau, within striking distance of Magdala, and all preparations were made for the final advance; scaling ladders were prepared, and sandbags got ready. A letter was sent by the Commander-in-Chief to Theodore, demanding the surrender of the prisoners, and arrangements were made to cut him off, should he attempt to escape. The troops started to advance on April 7th, when they crossed the Bashilo river. This mountain torrent is swift and girth-deep, and luckily the crossing was not disputed by the enemy. In front of them now lay the Aroge plateau, bounded by two immense rocky bastions, Senassie and Fahla, which completely command the road. As the head of the British column debouched on the Aroge tableland, Theodore's guns from the Fahla bastion opened a plunging fire on them, which luckily did no harm. At the same time, a dense mass of Abyssinian warriors was seen swarming down the sides of the mountain to attack the brigade as it deployed.

A very fierce engagement now took place between the 23rd Pioneers, who were acting as escort to the Royal Artillery, and a large body of Abyssinians; as the Pioneers did not possess the breech-loading rifle, the enemy closed with them, and were only driven off at the point of the bayonet. At the same time, another party of the enemy, attempting to turn our right flank, was defeated by the fire of our rockets and musketry. It was now 7 o'clock. Darkness was coming on, accompanied by a severe

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SEPOYS *circa* 1857, FROM CONTEMPORARY SKETCHES

By the courtesy of Lt.-Colonel R. Waller

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thunderstorm, and to pursue the enemy into the mountains would be courting disaster. The troops therefore bivouacked on the field of battle, wet to the skin but elated at the success, after many weary months of marching, of their first brush with the enemy. Theodore, who had watched the fight from the Fahla bastion, was correspondingly depressed; his boastful self-confidence gave place to deep gloom. The naval rockets, in particular, greatly alarmed him.

Next morning, the 2nd Brigade having come up, the whole force, covered by skirmishing lines, pushed well out in front, advanced over the Aroge plateau, when suddenly a small body of horsemen, bearing a white flag, was seen winding slowly down the mountain road leading up to Magdala. It was a flag of truce in charge of Lieut. Prideaux and Mr. Flad, with a verbal message from the king, asking for terms. Napier's answer was brief: 'Submit to the Queen of England, deliver all the Europeans safely this day to the British camp, and I guarantee honourable treatment for yourself and all the members of Your Majesty's family.' The messenger rode back to Magdala bearing his reply. For some time there was considerable anxiety lest Theodore, in one of his paroxysms of rage, would massacre the prisoners; it was, therefore, with the greatest relief that the army saw them arrive on the night of April 12th, 28 men, 8 women, and 23 children, of many European nationalities. They had been in confinement for over five years, and had been barbarously treated, starved, manacled and even tortured, and in almost constant fear of death. Meanwhile, preparations for the final assault were proceeding apace. The elephants, with almost incredible labour, were dragging the breaching batteries up the precipitous mountain-paths made slippery by the recent rain. Fahla and Selassie were occupied without resistance. The guns opened a heavy fire on the gateway of Magdala on the 13th, under cover of which the storming party advanced to the attack at 4 p.m. They met with little opposition; on entering, they found that the wretched maniac, who had

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been the author of these troubles, had committed suicide. On the 17th Magdala was committed to the flames, as a warning to the surrounding tribes against a repetition of the barbaric acts which had necessitated the expedition, and the mighty conflagration was seen afar for many miles. The rains were now breaking, and it was necessary to evacuate the country with all speed, or the force ran a great risk of being cut off by the rising of the mountain torrents. This was achieved with great skill and expedition. On May 24th Senafé was reached, and a grand review in honour of the Queen's birthday was held. On May 28th, the 25th was sent, under Colonel Little, to punish the murderers of Mr. Dufton, who had been set on by some Sholio ruffians in the Kumaylie pass. They returned, after a long and fatiguing day's work, in the course of which their commanding officer reported that, 'though without food and water, they were as eager and willing as I could wish.' On May 4th the coast was reached, and embarkation proceeded throughout that month, Sir Robert Napier and his staff leaving for England on June 10th. The 25th was the last regiment to leave Zula, and remained in charge of stores until June 11th. By the 19th of the month Annesley Bay was once more deserted. So ended an expedition, which, largely owing to efficient handling, had achieved its aims almost without bloodshed, for the Abyssinian, ensconced in his mountain fastnesses, is no despicable foe, as the Italians discovered to their cost on the disastrous field of Adowa in 1896. The experiment of transporting a large force overseas was carried out almost without a hitch, and reflected equal credit on the staff of the Bombay Army and the Indian Marine. It was a worthy prelude to the much greater undertaking of forty-seven years later, when Bombay was the overseas base of the great campaigns in East Africa and Mesopotamia.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER IV

I have followed the official *Record of the Expedition to Abyssinia*, compiled by order of the Secretary of State for War, 2 vols., (London, 1870), which contains a full bibliography of the campaign.

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THE THIRD BURMESE WAR

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CHAPTER V

THE THIRD BURMESE WAR

AFTER their return from Abyssinia, the regiment was not called upon again to take the field for nearly twenty years. On March 6th, 1876, it provided a Guard of Honour, consisting of one Lieutenant, one Subedar, one Jamadar, four Havildars, and 100 rank and file, on the occasion of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to Indore, and H.R.H. expressed himself as highly pleased with the smart appearance of the men. From February, 1877, to March, 1880, the 25th was stationed at Aden, with detachments at Perim, and here, in December, 1878, new colours were presented to it, at a brigade parade, by Mrs. Locke, wife of Brigadier-General Locke, commanding the Aden Brigade. In presenting the colours, Mrs. Locke said: 'The memories of Meeanee, Hyderabad, Persia, Central India and Abyssinia, together with the names of the gallant Napier and Outram, must still remain in the hearts of many of you, stimulating you to maintain the high character the regiment justly bears. The names emblazoned on your old colours show that the 25th Regiment has shared, and, we know, shared honourably, in many campaigns, and I feel a strong conviction that should it ever again be called upon to take a part in helping to maintain the honour of England and the Empress of India, these new colours will be zealously guarded, and borne with credit and honour, as were the old ones.' Lt.-Colonel Little, in reply, assured Mrs. Locke that the new colours would be borne with the same love, regard and respect as the old ones ever were; 'they shall be defended, should occasion ever arise, to the last extremity; and they shall be proudly, gladly and gallantly borne, in the face of any foe, no matter when, no matter where, when our services may be called for to support the honour, glory and

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dignity of our Queen-Empress and the British Empire.' This was practically the last public occasion on which this gallant officer was associated with the regiment in which he had gone all through the Central India campaign, and which he had commanded in Abyssinia. In December, 1878, he had been appointed to the command of the Nusserabad Brigade with the rank of Brigadier-General, and on June 5th, 1880, he retired from the service. On his departure, he issued the following farewell order to his old comrades-in-arms of the 25th:

'The Commandant, having obtained furlough on medical certificate to England, feels that the time has come to bid farewell to his old corps. For thirty-seven years has Colonel Little been associated with the 25th, and it is with feelings of very deep regret that he leaves comrades with whom he has so long served.

'He is proud to think that he has served with them in the glory and hardships of two campaigns, and been witness many a time to their good soldierlike qualities, for, whether in the distasteful life of "boardship" when they forgot their temporary discomfort in looking forward to the campaign before them, in the monotony of cantonment life, or on long tedious marches, they have ever done their duties cheerfully and well, and in the presence of the enemy, on many a hard-fought field, have they proved themselves worthy of the distinguished name they have gained.

'They require no exhortation to continue in such a course, for Colonel Little feels sure, from the excellent spirit which exists in the regiment, they will ever uphold the honour and good name of the 25th Light Infantry; but in bidding them adieu he assures all ranks that, wherever they go, they will ever carry with them the hearty good wishes for their health and happiness of their old Commandant.'

About this period, the 25th suffered from a veritable epidemic of changes in its Commanding Officers. Lt.-

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Colonel Chapman, who succeeded Colonel Little on January 2nd, 1879, retired in the following December. He was succeeded by Lt.-Colonel Jameson, who went on furlough in December, 1882, and did not return. Major Kitchen, who acted for him, died shortly afterwards, and in quick succession he was followed by Major Mackay,[1] Major Marshall,[2] Lt.-Colonel Withers, Lt.-Colonel C. C. Pemberton (from the 24th N.I.),[3] and Lt.-Colonel H. S. Tandy, who took command in September, 1887, and saw most of the fighting in Burma with them.

In spite of these frequent changes, usually so fatal to efficiency, annual reports show that the 25th was steadily maintaining its reputation. On April 24th, 1883, we read in Orders that 'the Brigadier-General commanding the Division has much pleasure in announcing the very satisfactory state of H.M.'s 25th Regiment N.L.I., and the gratification of the Commander-in-Chief at observing that it heads the list this year in the annual course of musketry made by the Bombay Army.' The 25th was making a reputation for itself in musketry. In 1883, 1884 and 1885 it won the squad trial stakes three years in succession at the annual Rifle Meeting at Poona; in 1884 it created a record, with 104 points out of a possible 120. In 1885 it made the highest score (90), with fifteen regiments competing. In March, 1884, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief expressed himself as 'much pleased with the excellent report of the 25th Regiment N.L.I., under the command of Major J. Withers. His Excellency gives great credit to that officer and the officers under his command for the exceedingly satisfactory state of every department of the regiment.'

In 1885 the trouble which had long been brewing in Burma came to a head. The First Burmese War resulted

[1] Appointed D.S.P., East Khandesh, June 3rd, 1883.
[2] Retired, May, 1885.
[3] Acting C.O. of the 25th, May 23rd, 1885. Took command of Kyonksé District, U.B.F.F., June 3rd, 1886. Appointed C.O., 8th Bombay N.I., September 20th, 1887.

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in the annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim, and the Second (1852) in the conquest of Pegu. Upper Burma, sullen and suspicious, refused to grant facilities for British trade, and when King Thebaw succeeded to the throne of Ava in 1878, his hostile attitude resulted in the withdrawal of our representative in the following year. The mercantile community continually urged upon the Indian Government the conquest of the country, and Thebaw had the insolence and folly to deliberately provoke a war by imposing a fine of 23 lakhs on the Bombay-Burma Trading Company, and ordering the arrest of all its servants. At the same time, he invited the interference of the French from the side of Siam, by granting them extraordinary diplomatic and consular privileges. This was more than Lord Dufferin could stand; an army, under General Prendergast, was mobilized at Rangoon, and, when no satisfactory reply to our ultimatum could be obtained, a British flotilla steamed up the Irrawady, on November 14th, 1885. Mandalay was captured, King Thebaw deported to Ratnagiri in the Bombay Presidency, and Burma annexed on January 1st, 1886. The war was over in a fortnight, but it was only then that the real fighting began. For over five years, bands of dacoits carried on a desperate guerilla campaign in the dense malarious jungles, which they knew to an inch, and became at one time so formidable that 30,000 troops had to be employed against them. Success in this guerilla campaign was only achieved, as in South Africa in 1900–2, by means of chains of strong posts from which mobile columns could operate. This entailed an immense amount of laborious work and constant vigilance on the part of the troops engaged.

The 25th arrived at Rangoon on May 9th, 1886, and on disembarking, one company, under Lieut. Baugh, proceeded to Alôn on the Upper Chindwin, and another, under Major Price, was sent to Yewan. The company on the Upper Chindwin was actively employed till December 7th, 1886, when it returned to Paleck in the Kyonksé District. Here it had constant patrolling

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work, with a number of sharp skirmishes against bands of dacoits. In a night attack upon the village of Wodaw, June 8th, 1886, ten men were wounded. Major Price's company, in the meanwhile, was incessantly on the move in unknown country covered with dense jungle, and constantly fired upon by snipers. On June 23rd, 1886, this company was engaged in a combined attack on a stockade, in which Captain Wilabraham of the Somersets was mortally wounded, and the 25th lost five men wounded. A great part of the regiment was engaged in a sharp fight for the capture of Hinwawaing on December 12th, 1886, and in January, 1888, a company, under Lieut. Wilson, escorted the Brigadier-General on an expedition of exploration and reconnaissance to the Natik Pass, and won high praise for the way it carried out its work. From January 14th, 1887, until the regiment embarked for Prome, at the end of March, 1888, it had its headquarters at Mandalay, being split up into small parties of 30 to 50 men, who were engaged on patrol, escort to treasure, storming stockades, and occasionally in an attack upon a fortified village. Such a campaign is nonetheless arduous because it cannot be described in detail by the historian. 'The subaltern's war,' as it was sometimes called, was essentiallly a war of skirmishes. Usually, our sepoys were fighting against an invisible foe, who 'lay up' for them as they came up the river in boats, or marched along the winding forest paths, poured in a volley at close range, and bolted. Sniping at covering troops, who screened working parties employed in cutting roads through the dense jungle, was almost incessant. Our only retaliation was to send out small columns to burn the nearest villages; but these were usually found empty, and the troops could generally be sure of being waylaid on the return journey. Numerous instances of individual bravery were brought to notice during the different operations, and many of the Indian officers commanding posts were highly commended by the officers under whom they served. Added to the dense jungle and the rough nature of the country,

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much of it totally unexplored, were the climatic conditions. The rainfall in Burma is heavy, the heat is often intense, and malaria and cholera took their toll of all ranks. These trials all told upon the men, yet they bore them cheerfully and were always eager and keen.

Their casualties in Burma were as follows:

Killed in action	1
Wounded	21
Died in Burma	48
Died subsequently in India	10
Invalided home	147

Total 227, out of a strength of 504 of all ranks.

Two excellent Subedars, Haskelji Israel and Bola Ram, died of fever in hospital at Mandalay; of the former it was remarked in orders that 'his courage was as conspicuous as his coolness', and of the latter, that he had well helped to maintain the good name of the regiment and had won the respect of his officers as well as the regard of his comrades. Major R. L. Price and Lieut. Ayerst were mentioned in despatches.

On June 16th, 1887, the following General Order from Simla was received:

'The Governor-General in Council now takes the opportunity of the return to India of a large portion of the Field Force, to signify the cordial recognition of the Government of India of the distinguished manner in which the army has acquitted itself during a series of arduous and protracted operations.

'His Excellency in Council congratulates the army upon the spirit which has been shown by all ranks in confronting the difficulties inseparable from a campaign carried on over a vast extent of country, amidst dense jungles and forests, and under great stress of climate—conditions which have called forth high military qualities. The difficulties and hardships of the campaign have not been overcome without heavy loss, and the Governor-General in Council deplores the death of many brave officers and men in action and from disease, who

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have fallen in the discharge of their duty to their Queen and country.

'It has been the pleasing duty of the Governor-General in Council to convey to Her Majesty's Government the high appreciation of the Government of India of the eminent services performed by Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief in India, and the general officers, officers and men, who took part in those operations.

'The Viceroy and Governor-General in Council has much gratification in announcing to the army that Her Majesty the Queen-Empress of India has been graciously pleased to approve the grant of the India Medal, similar to that conferred for the Second Burmese War, with a clasp inscribed "Burma, 1885–87", in commemoration of the services of the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, British and Native, who have taken part in the military operations in Burma. The medal and clasp will be granted to all the troops who served in the Burma Field Force, and also to such of those belonging to the Lower Burma Division and the Eastern Frontier District, as were engaged in active operations between the 14th November, 1885, and the 30th April, 1887, both days inclusive.'

The Secretary of State for India and the Secretary for War both wrote congratulating Sir George White, V.C., K.C.B., on 'the fine achievement of his troops under very trying circumstances'. It was no small honour to the 25th to have won the admiration of such distinguished soldiers as their Brigadier, Lord Wolseley, and Major-General Sir George White. On August 8th, 1888, Colonel Tandy notified in orders that the 'Commander-in-Chief has expressed his satisfaction at receiving a gratifying report on the regiment made on the last annual inspection taken at Mandalay in February'; and on January 25th, 1891, they were informed that H.M. the Queen-Empress of India had been graciously pleased to permit the corps to bear, upon its colours, standards and

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appointments, the words 'Burma, 1885–87', in commemoration of its gallant conduct during the operations resulting in the conquest of Upper Burma.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER V

There is very little literature on the subject of the last Burmese War. Besides regimental records and official despatches, I have followed Nisbet's *Burma under British Rule and Before* (London, 1901), and Sir Charles Crosthwaite's *Pacification of Burma* (London, 1912).

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FROM THE BURMESE WAR TO THE GREAT WAR OF 1914

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MAJOR-GENERAL C. I. FRY, C.B.,
HONORARY COLONEL, 5/6TH RAJPUTANA RIFLES

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CHAPTER VI

FROM THE BURMESE WAR TO THE GREAT WAR OF 1914

THE most important event in the regimental annals of the 25th during the next few years was its change of title. In 1888 it became a Rifle Regiment. The significance of this change will, perhaps, be made clearer if we examine the history of the British Army in the eighteenth century. In the earlier part of that century, the wonderful system of drill and manœuvre evolved by Frederick the Great and his captains had made the Prussian Army the model for every country in Europe; but this rigid system, invaluable for overcoming an organized force on the battlefields of Europe, proved worse than useless under different conditions. In 1756, during the Seven Years' War in America, General Braddock, marching with a fine body of picked soldiers to the attack of Fort Duquesne,[1] was ambushed by the French and their Redskin allies in the backwoods. Braddock, himself a brave and capable soldier, had to watch his splendid force gradually disintegrated by the fire of an invisible foe, to which he had no means of replying. Borne away from the battlefield to die of his wounds by the roadside, he is said to have exclaimed, 'We shall learn how to do it better next time.' The Duke of Cumberland, himself a general trained in the Prussian school, was quick to grasp the significance of the change, and he availed himself of the offer of a Swiss soldier of fortune, M. Jacques Prevost, to raise a regiment, called the Royal Americans, consisting largely of provincials, who were to combine the proficiency of the scout with the discipline of the trained soldier. In

[1] Now Pittsburg. It was one of the ring of forts connecting Canada and Louisiana.

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their training, intelligence, rather than rigid drill, was to be the chief aim; the soldiers were to cultivate the scouting instincts and individuality of the backwoodsman; the red uniform was discarded in favour of a neutral tint; and they were armed with the hunter's weapon, the rifle. By these means, it was hoped to be able to meet the Red Indian upon equal terms. The idea, thus started, was introduced into the training of the British Army by Sir John Moore, who employed it in organizing his famous Light Division at Shorncliffe in 1803, which amply justified its existence in the Peninsular War. Nowadays, tactical necessities have very largely abolished the difference between the Rifle and the Infantry Regiment, though the former still retain their individual drill and uniform. But formerly the distinction was a very real one, and it was in recognition of the past services of the 25th that H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, then Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, when asked to choose two linked battalions to be joined to the 4th Battalion Bombay N.I. in order to form a Rifle Regiment, chose the 23rd and the 25th.[1] The 23rd and the 25th, besides having as their colonels the two great protagonists of the Sind campaign, Outram and Napier, had actually a common origin in Ford's Brigade of 1817. The old 4th, 23rd and 25th are at present designated the 1st, 4th and 5th Battalions, 6th Rajputana Rifles. By General Order 507, of the Governor-in-Council, Bombay, October 31st, 1888, these regiments were to be formed into a Rifle Regiment of three battalions, styled as under:

The Rifle Regiment (1st Battalion)
Do do (2nd Battalion)
Do do (3rd Battalion)[2]

By General Order No. 2, of January 13th, 1890, the titles were changed as under:

[1] The 4th Battalion, Wellesley's Rifles, is the oldest Rifle Battalion in the Indian Army. It dates from Multan, 1849.

[2] The Army List incorrectly calls this title 'unauthorized'.

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The 4th Regiment	(1st Bn. Rifle Regiment)				of Bombay	Infantry	
The 23rd	do	(2nd	do	do	)	do	do
The 25th	do	(3rd	do	do	)	do	do

Meanwhile, the 25th was keeping up its reputation for musketry. In 1889–90 it stood first on the list of Bombay regiments armed with the Snider rifle, and twentieth in the whole Indian Army, and in the following year, and again in 1894, it annexed, appropriately enough, the Napier Memorial Challenge Shield at the Bombay Presidency Rifle Association meeting.

Assisting the civil authorities in maintaining order is a disagreeable but necessary part of the soldier's duties, and in August, 1893, some of the worst riots which Bombay has ever experienced broke out. Trouble had been brewing for some time when, on the 12th, thousands of Muhammadans issued from the Jama Masjid with cries of '*Din! Din!*' and stormed the Hindu quarter. Temples were desecrated and idols smashed; the quarters of the milk-sellers were fired; trams were overturned and smashed to pieces, and looting and murdering went on for three days. Pickets were attacked and forced to fire, and, before the rising was finally quelled, over 80 people were killed, nearly a lakh's worth of damage was done, and 1,500 arrests were made by the police. The 25th, under Colonel Tandy, were quickly on the scene. Going down by special train on the morning of the 12th, they were at first encamped on the Esplanade, till they were driven under cover by the monsoon. The serious nature of the situation is shown by the fact that three Indian and two European infantry battalions, all the local volunteer corps, and details of cavalry and artillery, had to be called out to cope with it. The 25th were in Bombay during the whole of August, returning to Poona on September 4th. They received the thanks of the G.O.C. Bombay District for the 'cheerful and efficient manner in which they undertook their arduous duties', and the 'firm and temperate spirit' which they displayed. 'The Brigadier-General cannot speak too highly,' the order concludes,

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'of the conduct of the troops and of their general demeanour towards the natives.' A Government resolution of November 16th thanked the troops for 'the excellent discipline maintained, and the temper and moderation displayed'.

On May 12th, 1894, the regiment was forced to say good-bye to its Commandant, Lt.-Colonel. H. S. Tandy, who was appointed to officiate as D.A.G.; he was succeeded by Major L. G. Beckenham. In April, 1895, a very important change was made in the class composition of the 25th. In the old days of the Company, any likely recruit was enlisted in the Bombay Army, regardless of caste. An analysis of the 23 names of the men of the 25th on the Meeanee monument shows 2 Pardeshi Brahmans, 12 Marathas or Mahars, 4 Rajputs and Sikhs, and 5 men of the lower castes from Hindustan—truly a motley collection! Beni-Israelites, a tribe of Bombay Jews, not unlike the Parsis, were enlisted in great numbers, and made excellent Indian officers. But it was found that under the peaceful rule of the British Raj, and the changed conditions of modern warfare, races which had done magnificently in the past, in the Carnatic for instance, had deteriorated, and no longer produced suitable recruits in sufficient numbers. There was another argument in favour of the 'class company' organization. By putting the races into water-tight compartments, not only were the feelings of 'class emulation' stimulated to the fullest extent, but the chances of a repetition of the outburst of 1857 were materially lessened. Hence, by G.G.O. 183, Bombay Castle, March 23rd, 1895, it was ordered that in future the 25th should be constituted as follows:

Two	Companies	Rajputs
Two	do	Jats (West Rajputana)
Two	do	Jats (East Rajputana and Central India)
Two	do	Panjabi Mussalmans

This class composition was to be attained by the enlistment of the authorized classes and the gradual

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elimination of all others. The enlistment of non-fighting castes of any class, or of men belonging to non-fighting races, except as musicians, fifers, drummers, buglers, clerks and artificers, to an extent exceeding six per company, was strictly forbidden.

On January 9th, 1896, the following splendid tribute was paid to the 25th by Major-General R. B. H. Blundell, commanding the Poona District:

'The regiment has been for five years in my command, and it has always shot and marched well, and has added to the prestige of my command. I have known it for twenty years and it has always been the same.'

Surely higher praise than this could scarcely be accorded.

On February 18th, 1896, came a welcome break in the tedious routine of station life. The 25th was ordered up to Quetta for duty on the Baluchistan frontier, and arrived there on March 13th, after spending eighteen days in Karachi. In a farewell message, wishing officers and men good luck, the General said, 'I shall always take a deep interest in the regiment which I have known so long, and of which I have so high an opinion.' Until September the regiment was stationed at Feraki, on the Toba Plateau, where it earned a good report from Major-General W. Gatacre; after this, it was on detachment duty on the Quetta-Sibi line, in order to quell an outbreak among the Marris; here, too, at an inspection parade on November 25th, it earned the public thanks of the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan. After a prolonged stay in the Quetta District, the 25th once more returned to Bombay on March 7th, 1898, where they were almost at once on duty in order to quell the dangerous riots caused by an outbreak, among the ignorant and fanatical Muhammadans of the lower classes, of hostility against measures adopted by Government for the suppression of the terrible visitation of plague which had first appeared in 1896. In these riots 19 were killed and 47 wounded;

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the 25th received the thanks of His Excellency the Governor of Bombay for the 'ready and efficient help afforded by them'. On January 24th, 1899, Brigadier-General F. Ventris, after inspecting the regiment, addressed them in the following terms:

'25th Bombay Rifles, this is the last time I shall see you on parade, and I take this opportunity of telling you that during your stay in this District the regiment has always done very well. I am also glad to be able to inform you that I have sent a very satisfactory report on the regiment to Command Headquarters.'

The official designation of the 25th was now twice again altered. On September 28th, 1901, by G.G.O. 837 of 1901, it was changed, from the somewhat cumbrous '25th Regiment, Bombay Infantry (3rd Battalion Rifle Regiment)', to the more expeditious title of 25TH BOMBAY RIFLES. Again, on October 8th, 1903 (Indian Army Order 181), this was again altered, on the renumbering of the Indian Army, to 125TH NAPIER'S RIFLES.[1] At the Coronation Darbar, December 23rd, 1902, in recognition of its services in the Mutiny, the 125th was permitted to send three representatives, and accordingly Subedar-Major Bauna Singh, Naik Gulam Rasul, and Rifleman Mota Ram were selected for this honour. During 1903, the 125th was split up into detachments for service in the Persian Gulf, at Bushire, Muscat and Bagdad, and in the Aden Hinterland. On May 12th, 1903, Major (afterwards Major-General) C. I. Fry, of the 4th Bombay Rifles, was appointed Commandant, *vice* Lt.-Colonel L. G. Beckenham, retired.[2] That the regiment was maintaining its great reputation during these long years of peace may be gathered from periodical inspection reports. On April 15th, 1905, Lt.-General Sir Archibald Hunter, K.C.B., D.S.O., Western Command, speaks of them as 'an all-round good regiment, fit for service'.

[1] In 1922 it received its present designation, '4th Battalion, 5th Rajputana Rifles.' [2] C.O. No. 492 of 1903.

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Major-General F. H. Wodehouse, C.B., C.M.G., reports, in September of the same year, that 'Napier's Rifles are evidently a very smart, clean regiment. The appearance of the men in their undress clothes was most creditable. The physique of the men is very good'. On March 7th, 1906, the regiment was ordered to Bangalore, where it continued to earn golden opinions from all concerned. In 1907, and again in the following year, it was allowed to have 270 men on the Indian Army Reserve; already, in 1905, it had been selected by the Commander-in-Chief, along with the 104th and 123rd and the 107th and 128th Pioneers, for augmentation to a strength of 832. On August 3rd, 1909, the General Officer Commanding Southern Army spoke of it as 'one of the best regiments in the Southern Army; good physique and A1 marching. The regiment moves very rapidly'. 'A very fine regiment' is a comment which recurs in the reports of this period with regularity.

On March 21st, 1910, the 125th had to say goodbye to Colonel C. I. Fry, who addressed to them these words in farewell:

'On relinquishing command of the regiment, I wish to thank all the officers, non-commissioned officers and men for their hearty co-operation with me in my endeavours to bring the regiment to its present high state of efficiency. Since joining the regiment nearly seven years ago, I have watched the progress made from year to year, and I am happy to say I have seen a constant and steady improvement in all branches of military efficiency, and, during the last two years, the annual reports are all that could be desired. I am sure that under my old comrade, Major A. H. Dennys, they will always continue to act up to their glorious traditions, and keep up the spirit of NAPIER'S RIFLES as a loyal, trustworthy regiment—swift and brave in the field, with a fine *esprit de corps* and good feeling pervading all ranks. Now I bid farewell to all, and I hope it may be my good fortune to meet them all again soon.'

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Lt.-Colonel Fry was succeeded by Lt.-Colonel A. H. Dennys, under whom the 125th continued to earn good reports and win numerous prizes in assaults-at-arms and divisional rifle meetings at Bangalore, until its transfer to Mhow in December, 1910. On May 13th, 1910, Subedar-Major Tulsi Ram, accompanied by Rifleman Anilal Das as Sword Orderly, was sent to England to attend the Coronation of His Majesty the King-Emperor George V. On the 4th and 5th November, 1912, the 5th Mhow Division was inspected by H.E. the Commander-in-Chief, and on the 7th it paraded for H.E. the Viceroy, and on both occasions it won high praise. On November 3rd, 1913, while No. 1 and 2 Double Companies were doing their training scheme, they marched to the fort of Dhar, which they had stormed in October, 1857, and were accorded a hearty welcome by His Highness Sri Udagirirao Powar.

In a report by the G.O.C. 5th (Mhow) Division, March, 1912, General Bloomfield had reported on the 125th as 'a good regiment, well commanded and with an efficient body of officers. The men are sound in wind and limb, with unusual power of rapid movement in the field, in which they show intelligence and that they have been well trained'.

The time was now at hand when the results of all these years of careful training and preparation were to be put to the test of war.

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THE GREAT WAR

FRANCE: AUGUST, 1914 - MAY, 1915

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

REGIMENTAL TYPES OF THE PRESENT DAY

Standing, L. to R.: Panjabi Mussalman (Naik) Jat Indian Officer, Piper (review order winter) Jat Havildar, Jat Rifleman. Piper (review order khaki). *Seated*, L. to R.: Piper (review order summer) Rajput (Naik).

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CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT WAR: FRANCE, AUGUST, 1914–MAY, 1915

IN August, 1914, the Indian army was called upon to face the severest ordeal in its history. From very early in the twentieth century, it had become clear that a struggle for world-supremacy between England and Germany was inevitable, and that, when it came, it would strain the resources of the Empire to the uttermost. Accordingly, the Committee of Imperial Defence had, throughout this period, been busy in organizing our colonial armies upon modern lines, and the Indian Army was not neglected. We have already referred to the epoch-making abolition, in 1895, of the old system of recruitment and the introduction of 'class' companies. About the same time, uniformity of training and greater administrative efficiency were secured by the abolition of the 'Presidency' Armies, which were replaced by four Lieutenant-Generals' Commands, under a Commander-in-Chief. But the greatest period of Indian Army reform was Lord Kitchener's term of office, lasting from 1902 to 1909. Lord Kitchener introduced a further centralization of power: the five Commands were reduced to two, the Northern and Southern, each in charge of a Lieutenant-General, the supreme command being vested in the Commander-in-Chief, assisted by the Headquarters Staff. At the same time, the Indian Army was reorganized from end to end: troops were re-armed with modern weapons, and the small scattered detachments were concentrated at the larger stations, where training and supervision could be properly carried out.[1] By 1914, there is no doubt that, as a result of Kitchener's sweeping reforms, the Indian Army was, on the whole, a well-armed, well-trained, and well-led body of men. Its

[1] 'We want to release troops rather than increase them,' said Lord Curzon.

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great weakness was the lack of reserves of British officers to replace casualties in the field. The *morale* of the regiments, thanks to the 'class company' system, and to the fact that officers and men were on excellent terms, no less than to the greatly improved conditions as regards pay, allowances, housing and food, was splendid; and there was little chance of the fulfilment of the German prediction, that Indian troops would refuse to fight, or would be pinned to their ground by internal disturbances. But there were still lamentable defects in organization which had never been remedied. Just before the War the Government was passing through one of its periodical waves of economy. The number of divisions available for immediate mobilization had been cut down from nine to seven. The number of field guns per division had been reduced, and of heavy guns there was none. The worst feature of this orgy of economy was the starvation of the medical services, which was responsible for an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering and loss of life in Mesopotamia. The Kitchener-Curzon controversy had left behind it an evil legacy of divided command, and nobody knew whether the ultimate responsibility lay with the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief, with Delhi or Whitehall. Lord Kitchener's passion for centralization left his successor saddled with the dual duties of Army Member and Commander-in-Chief, and as Sir Beauchamp Duff admitted before the Mesopotamia Commission in 1919, he was so overwhelmed with masses of detail that he was practically cut off from contact with the combatant services. 'The layman in Bombay knew far more about what was happening in Mesopotamia than did A.H.Q. at the seat of Government.'[1] Much of the positive good effected by the Kitchener reforms had been undone by the Nicholson Commission, and, strange to relate, the Indian Govern-

[1] Lord Ronaldshay's *Life of Lord Curzon*, vol. ii, chapter xxx, *passim*. For some inexplicable reason, no responsible officer from A.H.Q. was sent to Basra to see things with his own eyes.

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ment had actually been forbidden to take up the question of the employment, in the event of a European War, of Indian troops in Europe, or even in the Persian Gulf.[1] Fortunately, Sir Douglas Haig, when he was Chief of Staff in 1911, had disregarded this prohibition, and, in spite of the fact that he received no encouragement from Lord Hardinge, had worked out a scheme which was subsequently utilized by the authorities. Under these circumstances, it was highly creditable to the Indian Army Command that they were able, at almost a moment's notice, to despatch two divisions to France and one to Mesopotamia, besides an expeditionary force to East Africa and troops for the protection of Aden and the Suez Canal, and to reinforce and maintain them in the field.

True, Indian overseas expeditions were no novelties. The Indian sepoy had fought for us in Egypt, Somaliland, Persia, Burma and China. The Abyssinian expedition had been a classic of its kind. Disraeli had ordered Indian troops to Malta in 1874, in order to overawe Russia. But that was a mere piece of bluff; and the Boer War of 1899–1902 was regarded as a 'White Man's War'. In the event of a rupture with Germany, it had been taken for granted that the rôle assigned to India would be frontier and internal defence, garrison duty in our numerous overseas possessions in the east, and the 'mopping up' of enemy colonies. Two untoward events upset the calculations of the Imperial General Staff. One was the entry of Turkey, our ancient ally, into the war on the side of Germany. The other, even greater catastrophe, was the collapse of France in the first two months. It had been calculated that our Expeditionary Force of six divisions, when thrown into the scale, would turn the balance in favour of the French. The Territorial Army, so admirably organized by that great and much-maligned Secretary for War, Lord Haldane, was intended solely to release the regu-

[1] Sir George McMunn, in the *National Review*, August, 1928.

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lar forces from the duty of home defence. These plans woefully miscarried. The French turning movement on their right was disastrously defeated; overwhelming German forces attacked their centre and left; the Belgians, who, twelve years before, had pigeon-holed Major George Clarke's[1] reports upon their fortresses, paid the inevitable penalty for their neglect; and the allied armies, after a long retreat and a partial rally, were left to hold the line of the Aisne until reinforcements could enable them to take the offensive. And this line was stretched to the breaking point. England had ample reserves. But they were untrained reserves, and it would be months before they could be got ready for field service and thrown into the battle. In this crisis, the General Staff bethought them of the Indian Army. Here was a large, well-equipped force of professional soldiers, who could at least be used to fill the gap. The need was desperate, and the experiment was hazarded. The Canadian Army, some of the finest material in the world, was trained for six months before it went into the line. The Indian troops, unpractised in trench-warfare, unused to high explosive or intensive bombardments, ignorant of the very existence of aeroplanes, and ill-provided with warm clothing,[2] were sent at a moment's notice from their tropical surroundings to face the horrors of a winter in the trenches, in a strange and far-off land, and to fight, in a quarrel not of their own seeking, against a people whom they had never seen and barely heard of. Many of them were deeply infected with malaria, and anyone with tropical experience knows the result of exposure, under such conditions, to cold and damp.[3] These factors must be taken into consideration in appraising the achievements of the Indian sepoy in France.

[1] Afterwards Lord Sydenham, Governor of Bombay.

[2] The 125th were sent into the line for the first time still wearing khaki drill. This was in December!

[3] A matter which seems very small, but is really very important, was the bad rationing and useless arrangements made for Indian cooking.

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On the 4th of August, 1914, England declared war against Germany. On the 8th the Lahore and Meerut Divisions (the 3rd and 7th Indian War Divisions) received orders to mobilize. The 125th was at the time at Mhow, being divisional troops and not part of a brigade. They were ordered, however, to join the Sirhind Brigade to replace a Gurkha regiment, declared unfit for service. The Sirhind Brigade, commanded by Major-General J. M. S. Brunker, thus consisted of the 1st Bn. H.L.I., 1/1st and 1/4th Gurkha Rifles, and the 125th; the 125th suddenly found themselves thrust, at very short notice, into a strange brigade, consisting of Gurkha troops, totally unlike those with whom they had hitherto served. The officers on the strength of the regiment, when it went on active service, were as follows:

Lt.-Colonel A. H. Dennys, Commandant[1]
Major F. P. C. Keily, Second in Command[2]
Captain B. C. Graham
„ G. H. Stevenson[3] (Joined later)
„ F. H. Maynard[4] (Do.)
„ H. J. Huxford
„ R. V. Hunt (1/123rd Rifles)
Lieut. D. T. Macdonald
„ M. E. M. Meade
„ H. S. Minchin[5]
„ L. W. Hughes
„ E. M. Skinner, Quartermaster
Captain P. Mills, I.M.S., Medical Officer

Captain G. E. Hardy, of the 1/123rd Rifles, joined the battalion at Suez on September 10th, 1914, and remained with it till May 19th, 1915; Captain W. Odell, of the same regiment, who joined with him, was killed in action at Sannayat, February 22nd, 1917. On August 17th the regiment left Mhow for Bombay and embarked on the

[1] Brig.-General, D.S.O., 11-2-1916.
[2] D.S.O., C.M.G., acting Brig.-General, 2-10-1918.
[3] Killed in action at Shaikh Saad, 17-1-1916.
[4] M.C., 17-1-1916.
[5] Missing, believed killed, near Festubert, 20-12-1914.

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S.S. *Barpeta*. On the 20th the troops, in fifteen ships, sailed, convoyed by H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, for Suez, which was reached on September 9th. From Suez the brigade went on to Cairo, and finally to Ismailia, and spent the months of October and November in patrolling the Canal. The time passed uneventfully, and all ranks were relieved when they were embarked on November 23rd for Marseilles. France was reached on the 30th; the regiment was entrained almost at once, and proceeded to Orleans, which was reached on December 5th. Here, after a brief halt to complete their clothing deficiencies, they set out for the front, via Abbeville, Etaples, Boulogne and Hazebrouck. The line held by the Indian corps at this time extended roughly from the La Bassée Road on the south to a point almost due east of Laventie on the north. This section of the line, running through a vast expanse of flat, low-lying, cultivated land, cut up by innumerable lanes, ditches and small streams, and dotted with farms and hamlets now reduced to a state of ruin, presented a dismal enough prospect, swept by bitter winds and sheets of rain, which quickly reduced trenches and parapets to liquid mud. Its dreary and comfortless appearance on a winter morning, especially to troops accustomed to campaigning under a tropical sun, was enough to depress the stoutest heart; and, added to this, many of the men were still wearing their Indian kit, and were unable to cook their food in native fashion.

The newly arrived Sirhind Brigade was allotted a section of the line running roughly from the cross-roads east of Festubert, past Le Plantain, to the north-east entrance to Givenchy village. On its left was the Dehra Dun Brigade. On its right, from Givenchy to the La Bassée-Bethune Road, crossing the La Bassée Canal, the line was prolonged by the Ferozpore Brigade, which linked up at the La Bassée road with the French. Partly because the Germans thought that the weakest link in the chain would be where the Indian corps joined up with the French, and partly because here the line forms a deep pocket, the Festubert-Givenchy area was the

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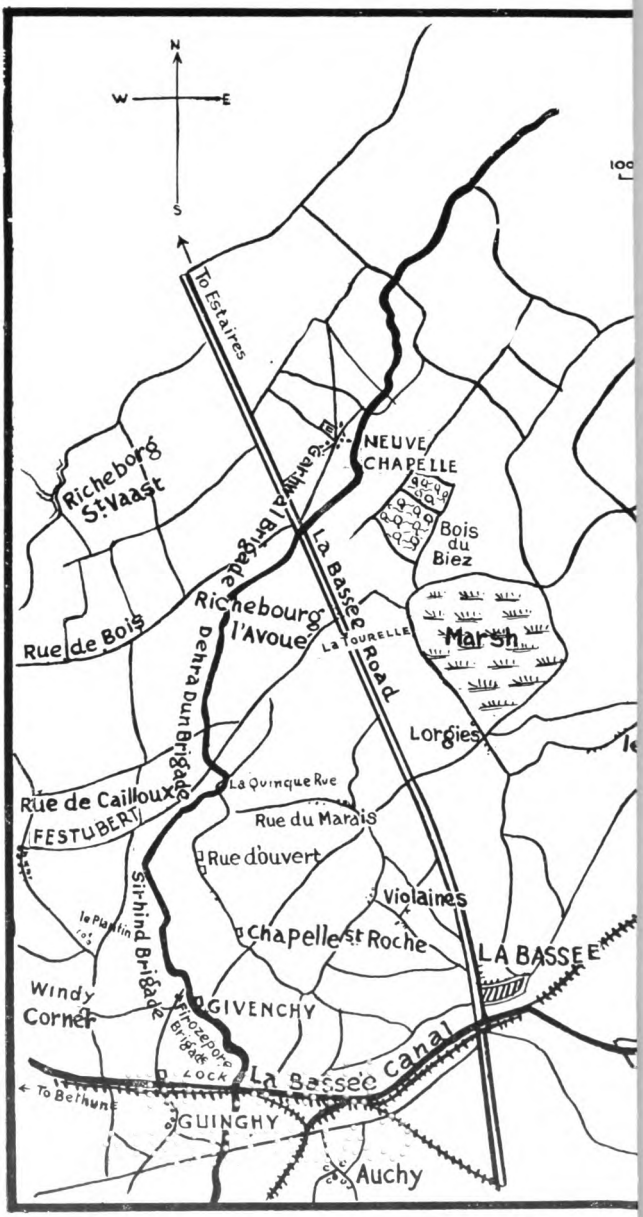

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scene of particularly fierce fighting. On December 11th, the 125th received orders to go into the trenches, and at 1 p.m. A and B companies went up the line, while C and D went into billets at Festubert. That night they suffered their first casualties, which, when they were relieved on the 15th by the 1/4th Gurkhas, amounted to two killed and 30 wounded, while there were 70 cases of 'trench feet', owing to the fact, that the men had been standing, often up to their waists, in water; and it was noticed that there was a good deal of exhaustion after these trying experiences. C and D companies, under Colonel Dennys, now took over the left section from the H.L.I., while A and B were in local reserve at La Plantain.

On the 18th broke out the bloody and indecisive struggle known as the Battle of Givenchy. The general orders given to the Indian corps had been 'to demonstrate and seize any favourable opportunity which may offer, to capture any enemy trenches on their front'. The 'demonstration', which was to take the form of an attack on the German front all along the line, was arranged for the night of December 18th–19th, and surely no battle was ever fought under more dismal conditions. The ground in front was a vast morass, pitted with shell-holes; the weather was cold and stormy, and the men chilled to the bone by icy winds and incessant rain. The part assigned to the Lahore Division was an attack on a front of three hundred yards on a point opposite the junction of the Sirhind and Lahore brigades, to be carried out by a battalion from each brigade. The left section of the attack was entrusted to the H.L.I. and the 1/4th Gurkhas, and the right section to the 59th Rifles, especially lent for the purpose. The left section went 'over the top' at 5.30 a.m., in inky darkness, and captured the trenches in front of them. But when daylight broke, it turned out that these were enfiladed from both sides, and, after holding out most gallantly all day, the attackers were withdrawn at dusk, after having suffered heavily. Nor did the 59th fare

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much better. In many places, the German wire was intact; in others, the trenches taken were soon full of a confused mob of German, British and Indian soldiers; and by nightfall the troops had been bombed out of most of the ground which they had won.

And now came the German counter-attack. At dawn, on December 20th, the whole of the area of the Sirhind Brigade round Givenchy village was deluged with shells from artillery and trench mortars, in the midst of which, with a deafening noise, a number of mines were exploded under the front line held by the H.L.I. and the 1/4th Gurkhas. These splendid regiments, already terribly mauled in the previous day's fighting, suffered in a ghastly manner, a double company of Gurkhas and a half-company of Highlanders being literally blown to pieces. Immediately after the explosion, masses of Germans advanced to the attack, and ferocious hand-to-hand fighting raged all along the line; at 1 p.m. a retirement was ordered, and was most gallantly covered by two machine gun parties, under Captain Wylie of the Gurkhas and Lieut. H. S. Minchin of the 125th. But in the midst of their work, another fearful explosion was heard, and the machine-gun parties perished almost to a man.[1] Another party from a company of the 125th, under Jamadar Fazal Dad, which had gone to carry rifles to the 1/4th Gurkhas, to replace those clogged with mud, also never returned. Things were now desperate; the Germans held the whole of the Sirhind Brigade front; they had driven the survivors back to the Festubert road, and had captured Givenchy itself. Gallant attempts were made to retake this important position by the Manchester Regiment, and further north by a dismounted cavalry brigade under Major-General Macbean; after some initial successes the attack failed, and the whole force fell back upon Festubert. The original line was eventually restored

[1] Except Captain Wylie, who miraculously escaped and was captured. Lieut. Minchin was never heard of again.

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by the 1st Division 1st (British) Corps, under General Hakin; the 1st British Brigade retook Givenchy, the 2nd Brigade went in support of the Dehra Dun Brigade, while the 3rd Brigade recaptured the trenches lost by the Sirhind Brigade. During the German attack, A and B companies of the 125th were holding the support trenches, and continued to do so until relieved at 10 p.m. on the 21st. C and D companies arrived at Festubert on the 19th at 5.30 a.m. and were quartered in the ruined houses until the violent German attack developed on the morning of the 20th, when they moved out to the reserve trenches; here, waist-deep in liquid mud, they held on until they were relieved, on the night of the 22nd, by the Welsh Fusiliers. The Germans took the firing line and support trenches, but got no farther. The brigade moved into billets on the morning of the 24th. Thus ended the bloody and fruitless Battle of Givenchy, a costly failure, in spite of the gallantry displayed, under almost impossible conditions, by all ranks. The operations failed chiefly owing to insufficiency of artillery support, many units advancing over open ground in broad daylight, with little or no artillery preparation. Contributory causes were the weakness of the forces employed and the undue length of the objective, which made it impossible to attack in sufficient depth to push home the assault and consolidate gains; lack of reconnaissance, which forced the troops to advance in the dark over unreconnoitred ground against trenches the position of which was imperfectly known, in consequence of which they often found themselves at daybreak 'in the air'; insufficient supply of bombs, which left the troops with nothing with which to reply to German bombing attacks; and, lastly, the awful state of the ground for night operations, waterlogged and cut up with trenches, canals and shell-holes. The terrible nature of the ordeal undergone may be judged from the fact that out of about 15,700 men originally composing the Indian Corps, 9,579 were returned as killed, wounded and missing by the end of December. The 125th had lost 7 killed, 69

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wounded, 26 missing and 153 sick. On his last visit to the Indian troops in France, Lord Roberts, three days before his death, had told them, 'many persons feared that the strange surroundings in which it is now your duty to fight would be too hard and too severe for Indian troops. I never shared that fear. I have fought with them too often in every kind of climate, and against every kind of enemy, not to be sure that there are no conditions so hard that they will not do their duty as soldiers.' The Indian troops had not falsified the expectations of their old commander. 'The Indian troops have fought with the utmost steadiness and gallantry whenever they have been called upon,' said Sir John French, in his despatch of February 2nd.

On January 8th, Sir John French and General Willcocks inspected the 125th. Sir John French remarked that they looked a remarkably fine body of men. After the inspection, General Willcocks, addressing the men, said that Sir John French had been very pleased to meet the regiment, and thanked them for the work done. He was quite aware that they were fighting in a foreign country and that they had gone through great discomforts owing to the water in the trenches and to sickness, but he was sure that they would continue to do their work in the future as well they had done it in the past. Until April, the 125th remained in billets, practising daily route-marching, bombing, and training in trench-warfare, and during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (March 9th–12th) it was lent to the 4th Corps for work on communications. On April 1st the regiment joined the Bareilly Brigade, under Brigadier-General Southey, and on the 12th it went into trenches near Croix Barbée. From the 12th to the 19th, it experienced the usual incidents of trench warfare, sniping, bombing, and occasional shelling, which resulted in a number of casualties. On April 19th it was relieved by the Black Watch, and again found itself in billets. On May 9th began the disastrous engagement known as the battle of Festubert, and the machine-gun section, under

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Captain F. H. Maynard, supported the assault, suffering 7 casualties out of the 24 engaged. On the 10th the regiment moved to Lansdowne Post, and A and B companies took over a portion of the trenches in the 'Port Arthur' sector. They were heavily shelled on the 18th and again on the 22nd, losing 11 killed and 25 wounded.

On May 23rd the regiment moved out of the trenches for the last time, for orders had come for it to proceed to Marseilles for embarkation for Egypt. Prior to its departure, it received the following message from General Southey to the Commanding Officer:

'Brigadier-General Southey wishes to convey to you and all officers and other ranks of your battalion his best thanks for the excellent work done by you and them while serving with the Bareilly Brigade. He wishes to put on record his complete satisfaction with the fine manner and cheerful spirit in which the brigade has always carried out every task he has asked it to do, and his admiration of the fine spirit with which all ranks have stood up to the severe artillery fire to which they have been exposed during their turn in the trenches.'

On May 24th General Willcocks, commanding the Indian Corps, came to inspect them and wish them good-bye, and at 10.55 a.m. the 125th entrained for Marseilles.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER VII

The Official History of the Great War, compiled by Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds, C.B., C.M.G., vols. ii–iv, is the standard authority for this campaign. Besides this, I have used regimental records and personal diaries of officers engaged. *The Indian Corps in France*, by Lt.-Colonel F. W. B. Merewether, C.I.E., and Sir F. E. Smith, was written at a time when the materials subsequently published were not available. *With the Indians in France*, by Gen. Sir James Willcocks (1920), is a detailed account containing much valuable information.

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THE GREAT WAR (*Contd.*)

THE MESOPOTAMIAN CAMPAIGN

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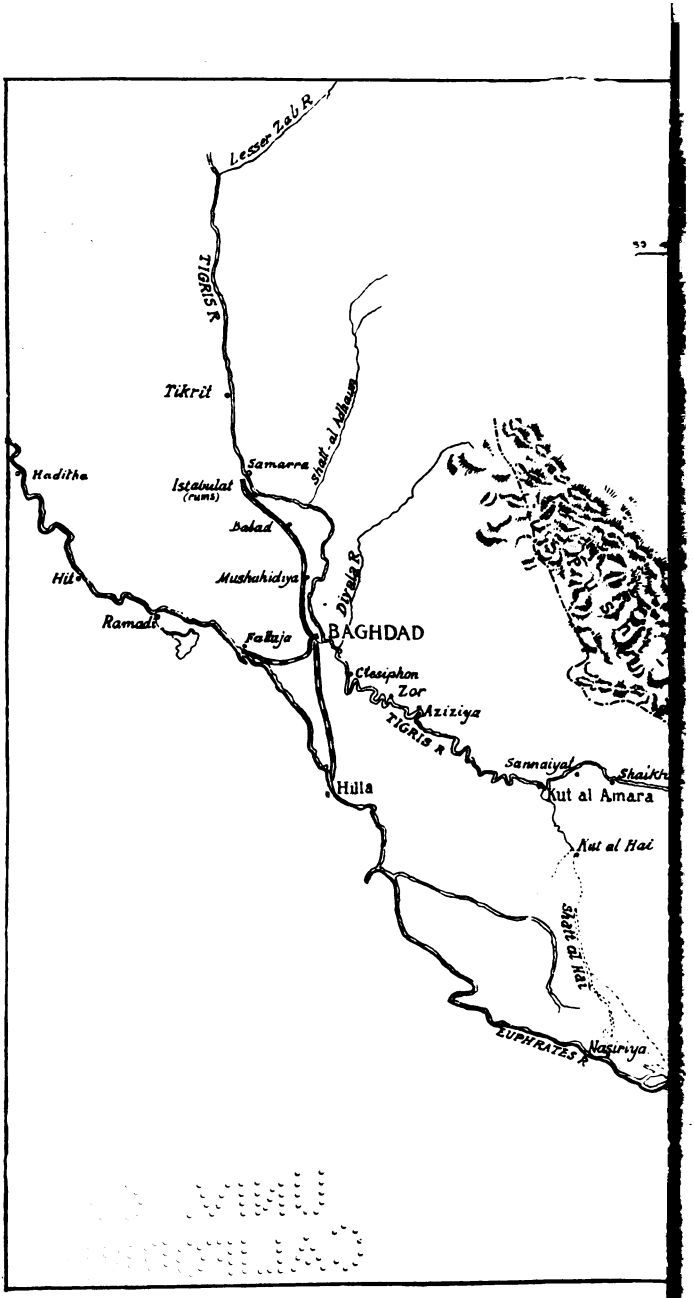

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CHAPTER VIII

THE MESOPOTAMIAN CAMPAIGN

ON June 3rd, 1915, the 125th, on the transports *Hymettus* and *Elephanta*, steamed out of Marseilles harbour. On the 11th they cast anchor at Suez, and the regiment was at once despatched for various posts along the line of the canal, in which they spent five uneventful months. Meanwhile, things were going from bad to worse in Mesopotamia. The Prime Minister had defined the rôle of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force as 'to secure the neutrality of the Arabs; to safeguard our interests in the Persian Gulf; to protect the oilfields; and, generally, to maintain the authority of our flag in the East'. These aims had been achieved by the capture of Kut-el-Amara on September 28th. By this time, the question of the evacuation of Gallipoli was under consideration, General Munro being sent to carry it out on October 22nd, and on October 31st the Secretary of State for India warned the Viceroy of a possible concentration of 60,000 Turks, set free from the Gallipoli Peninsula, at Bagdad by the following January. Yet, because 'we have great need of a striking success in the east', General Townshend was permitted to set out, with his single depleted division, to capture that city! A more terrible object lesson of the wickedness of allowing political aims to interfere with military strategy than the ensuing tragedy cannot be conceived. 'Our defeat on the Tigris,' it has been justly said, 'was the repercussion of Gallipoli.' Townshend's little 'ever-victorious army,' the 6th Division, won the last of a series of brilliant victories at Ctesiphon, eighteen miles from its objective, on November 22nd. Then, attacked by overwhelming enemy forces, it was forced to fall back on Kut-el-Amara, which was reached on December 2nd. Here it dug itself in to await reinforcements. But the

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Turks had quickly surrounded the place. The garrison was closely invested, and rumours (afterwards proved to be untrue) that it was short of food and could only hold out for a few weeks had necessitated assembling troops from every possible direction in order to relieve it. On December 10th the regiment left Suez on the S.S. *Baroda*, and was transferred, on Christmas Eve, to 'P' boats and lighters, to make the passage of the Tigris. The troops were in high spirits, as they saw before them a prospect of a fight after many months of rather monotonous activity; the discomforts and horrors of France were forgotten, and the regiment had thoroughly recovered its 'form'. The flat, sandy country on either side of the river, with its endless deserts, its palm-trees and donkeys, its mud huts and oriental smells, was a welcome sight to the sepoys, reminding them as it did of their own homes.

The fleet of transports wound its way slowly along past Kurna and Amara and reached our advanced base at Ali Garbi on the 28th, where it became part of the 19th Brigade, together with the Seaforth Highlanders and the 28th Panjabis. Lt.-Colonel Dennys being put in charge of the brigade, the command of the regiment devolved upon Major Keily. The force, as we have already remarked, was a 'scratch' one, assembled at short notice and composed of the most heterogeneous materials, and the confusion at railhead seemed at first inextricable; but on January 4th the army was ready to advance. The enemy was reported to be astride the river about four miles east of Shaikh Saad, i.e., at some twenty miles distance, with 4,500 men on the right bank and 9,500 on the left, in addition to hordes of Arabs hovering like vultures on their flanks. General Aylmer disposed his troops as follows. Our column on the right bank was to consist of the 28th Brigade, under General Kemball, while on the left we had the 35th Brigade, under General Rice, the 19th Brigade, under Colonel Dennys, and the 21st Brigade, under General Norie. A and B companies of the 125th formed the rearguard,

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and the whole force advanced twelve and a half miles on the first day. On the 6th, at noon, firing was heard in front, as General Rice's advance-guard came into action, and the forces remained in touch with the enemy until 6 p.m., when battle-outposts were taken up for the night, the 125th being on outpost duty. Next morning, the brigade moved off shortly after noon in artillery formation, Seaforths on the left, 125th in the centre, and the 28th Panjabis on the right. The 35th Brigade was on the left of the line, its left flank resting on the river, the 19th next to it, and the 21st Brigade on the extreme right, its flanks covered by two cavalry regiments. After advancing about three miles, it was found that the 19th Brigade had got out of touch with the 35th, and a change of direction was ordered. This was most unfortunate, for the Turks had entrenched a strong line at right-angles to the river, with an outflanking trench prolonging it on their left. They withheld their fire until the 19th Brigade was completely enfiladed, when a torrent of lead was poured into them at a range of 500 yards from front and flank simultaneously. The ground in front was a *glacis*, devoid of the slightest vestige of cover, but A and B companies of the 125th rushed forward without hesitation, while C company was directed round to the right with the machine-guns to meet the enfilade fire. The 125th and the Seaforths were now indiscriminately mixed up, but the advance was pressed forward in short rushes by mixed parties to within 300 yards of the enemy's trenches. By this time it had suffered appalling losses. Nothing could surpass the devotion of men and officers on this occasion, mowed down as they were by a murderous direct and enfilade fire at close range. Captain Maynard, commanding B company on the left, was hit three times in quick succession. While lying in the open, he was joined by his orderly, Nathu Ram, who had crawled out through this living inferno, and stayed by his officer all day, finally bringing him in after nightfall. Early in the action, Captain G. H. Stevenson, commanding A company on the right, received a severe

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wound in the shoulder, and went back to get it dressed. Then, seeing the line stabilized, he determined to push forward and join a party about 800 yards in front. On his way, he offered a splendid target to the Turks, who hit him four more times before he reached his objective. One of the bullet-wounds was in the jaw and must have been extremely painful. But he struggled on, and eventually found himself with a little group of sepoys and two officers, Lieuts. Shaw and Peacock, a few hundred yards from the enemy. He took charge of the party and made the men use their rifles, and during the course of the afternoon, exposed himself with the most reckless gallantry, in consequence of which he was hit *four more times*, making nine wounds in all! Peacock and Shaw urged and implored him to go back, but he steadily refused, and while they were trying to carry him in after nightfall, this gallant officer succumbed. *Stirbt ein held.* It is difficult, in all the annals of the Great War, to find a story of bravery and devotion to equal this. And so the fight went on, and it is even said that one little body of heroes actually got to within 30 yards of the Turkish trenches. But nothing could be done in the face of the storm of lead which swept the ground, and on the afternoon of the 8th, in order to straighten the line, a withdrawal was ordered to a new position. The 125th had gone into action 790 strong, and came out with only 350. Captain G. H. Stevenson, 4 Indian officers and 38 other ranks had been killed; Captain Maynard, Captain Skinner, Lieut. Shaw, 5 Indian officers, and 300 other ranks were wounded or missing. Unfortunately, the sufferings of the wounded were greatly aggravated by the breakdown of the hospital arrangements; the total casualties in the battle were over 4,000, and there was only provision for 250 beds. On the 9th the 19th Brigade moved off to take over trenches held by the 35th, but the officer guiding the column lost his way and Brigade H.Q. was not reached until dawn was breaking and the relief had to be postponed. News,

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however, arrived in the afternoon that the enemy was evacuating his position. The weather had now broken, and torrential rains were falling. At 5.30 p.m. the battalion was told off to form rearguard and escort for baggage, and did not reach camp till 2 a.m. the following morning. On the 11th, the troops remained in bivouacs, hoping for a rest, as they had been continually on the move, marching and fighting, for five days, with little or no sleep or food, and the weather was wet and cold; but at 7 p.m. the 19th Brigade was ordered to take up a position to protect the camp from a possible Arab raid. On the evening of the 12th, the whole force marched off to attack the Turks in the new position which they had taken up on the Wadi, a tributary of the Tigris. On this occasion, the 28th Brigade was to make a frontal attack, while the 21st, 19th and 35th executed a wide turning movement. At 1.30 a.m. on the 13th, those three brigades deployed into lines of battalions at 1,000 yards interval, the 125th and the 92nd Panjabis forming the first line. The brigades advanced in this formation till they came under fire, when a regular attack developed. At about 3 p.m., having closed to within 300 yards of the enemy's trenches, the two brigades proceeded to dig themselves in, and firing died down about dusk. Meanwhile, the frontal attack of the 28th Brigade, though pushed home with the utmost gallantry, had failed to reach its objective. At dawn, on the 14th, it was ascertained that the enemy had evacuated the position, and the whole force advanced to the river. In the operations on the Wadi, Major Graham, Major Keily, and 5 Indian officers were wounded, while of other ranks 22 were killed and 158 wounded. Lt.-Colonel Dennys, Lieut. Macdonald and 2nd Lieut. Maltby were the only unwounded British officers left in the whole regiment.

On January 20th the army advanced to the attack of the Hanna position, to which the enemy had now retreated. The plan was that the artillery should bombard the enemy's trenches for ten minutes, during which time

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the 35th Brigade would advance to within 200 yards of the enemy; the 19th Brigade, in the meantime, was to carry out a holding attack. A second bombardment, lasting for ten minutes, would start at 8.20 a.m., after which the 35th Brigade would assault. At first all seemed to go well, and some units actually got into the Turkish trenches, but the distance which had to be covered by the supports under terrific fire was too great, and at 9 a.m. word came that the 19th Brigade was to attack, as the 35th had been held up. At once the 125th advanced in three groups, Jamadar Munshi Singh in the centre, Lieut. Maltby, with a small party, on his right, and Lieut. Macdonald, with 20 men, on his right again. They pushed on through a storm of bullets; all three officers and most of the men quickly became casualties. Ammunition ran short and no more could be brought up, and lastly the rain came down in torrents and the country quickly became a quagmire. At dusk the brigade retired 1,000 yards on to a new line. The next day a truce for six hours was arranged, and the wounded, who were suffering terribly in the cold and wet, and were being plundered and killed by the Arabs, were brought in. Once more the medical arrangements proved lamentably inadequate, increasing tenfold the tragedy of the situation. The 125th, or rather the remnants of the gallant regiment, now returned for a short time to camp to refit; all the British officers except Colonel Dennys had been wounded, and over sixty per cent of the Indian officers and men; they were glad, therefore, to receive drafts of 9 British officers, 5 Indian officers and 710 other ranks from various battalions. Owing to these drafts, the companies were reorganized as follows:

A Company	..	.. Mussalmans only
C Company	..	.. Rajputs only
B and D Companies	..	.. Jats, Gujars and Rawats

On February 10th the regiment was delighted to learn that Major Keily had received a well-deserved D.S.O.

On February 11th the regiment returned to the

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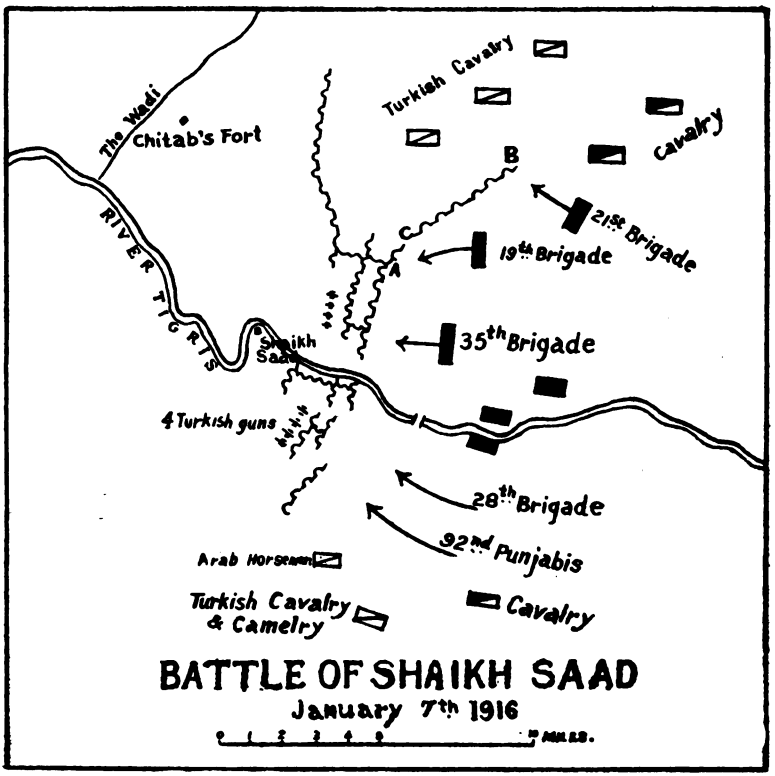

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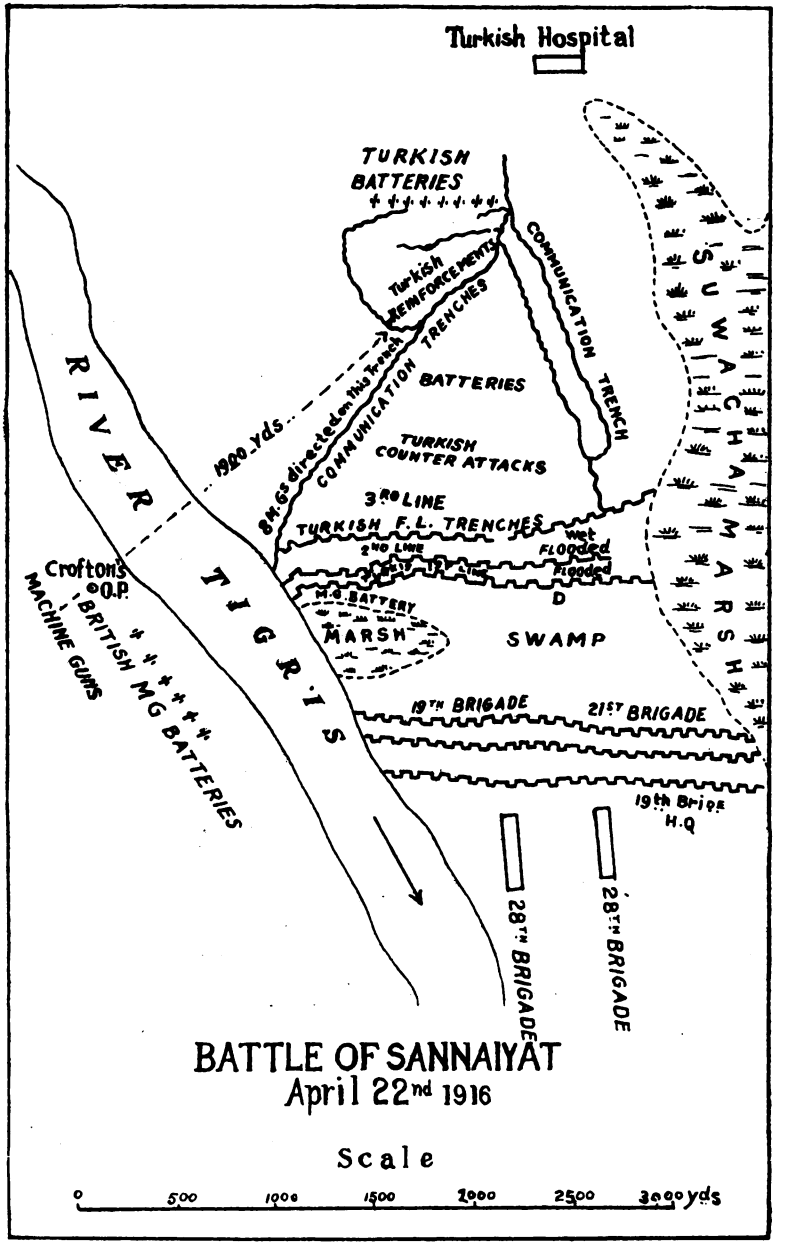

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trenches, and spent a strenuous period of seven weeks' almost uninterrupted labour, gradually sapping up to the Turkish lines. While they were thus employed, an unsuccessful attempt to surprise the Dujaila redoubt and turn the Turkish right flank was made on March 8th, after a wonderful night march of twenty-five miles. On April 2nd the famous 13th Division from Gallipoli took over the trenches, which by this time had been pushed to within one hundred yards of the enemy, and on the 5th they assaulted the Hanna lines at dawn. Little opposition was encountered, and the troops pressed on to the lines of Falahujeh, which were carried at the point of the bayonet.

But behind the Falahujeh lines lay the Sannayat position, and to storm this, the gallant and ill-fated 7th Division were once more brought into action. They advanced, with the 19th Brigade on the left, the 28th on the right, and the 21st in reserve. The order of march was as follows: Highland Light Infantry on the left, 28th Panjabis on the right and the 92nd Panjabis and 125th Rifles in support. The brigade marched in column of platoons, and much delay and confusion took place in the darkness. The ground was honeycombed with trenches, and units became mixed up with the retiring 13th Division. Machine-guns had to be left behind, and when dawn broke at 5.30 a.m. the assaulting troops were still 800 yards from their objective. The attack was delivered over level ground absolutely devoid of cover, and soon came under a torrent of fire, poured into the troops at short range. Some of the platoons were caught while still deploying, and, after advancing for about 200 yards, they spent the remainder of the day in digging in. The next morning (April 7th) the attack was renewed, with similar results. This time the brunt of the fighting fell on the 125th Regiment, who now formed the centre of the front line. They advanced through a sheet of lead. Within a few minutes, the Commanding Officer, Major Keily, was hit. Captain Carey, the next senior, was wounded before the message reached him to take over;

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and his successor, Captain Hickey, fell before he had given an order. Lieuts. Peacock and Burton were mortally wounded, and Lieut. Kiddle carried the latter back to safety under a murderous fire, for which brave action he received the Military Cross. The regiment, losing heavily at every step, struggled to within 700 yards of the Turks, when it dug in. By this time, the British officers being casualties, three companies were commanded by Indian officers and platoons by N.C.O.'s. Their total losses were 316, or 61 per cent of their strength. They were as follows:

Killed	2nd Lieut. Harris	
Died of wounds	„ „	R. F. Burton
	„ „	P. Peacock
Killed	Rank and File, 40	
Wounded	Major F. P. C. Keily	
	Captain T. de C. Carey	
	„	C. C. Hickey
Indian Officers	6	
„ Other Ranks	264	

The difficult and dangerous task of evacuating the wounded under heavy fire was carried out with the utmost gallantry by Captain R. F. Gow, I.M.S., who was awarded a D.S.O. for his devoted services on this occasion. Ineffective attacks on the Sannayat position were delivered on the 8th and 9th, and on the 11th, and the 19th Brigade again relieved the 13th Division in the front line. It was a fearful night of storm and lightning and rain. The 125th arrived in the line wet through and covered with mud, which clogged their machine-guns and rifles. The trenches were now partially flooded and full of mud and debris of every description. On the 18th Captain Macdonald, who had been wounded at Hanna on January 21st, returned and assumed command. On April 22nd the 19th Brigade again attacked, and the 125th Regiment was ordered up to the assault. A shell-swept zone had to be crossed in order to reach the firing line, and the battalion suffered heavily. On reaching the front line trenches, the regiment was

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ordered to go to the support of the Seaforths. The Highlanders had penetrated the Turkish second line, only to find themselves waist-deep in mud, which jammed their rifles completely. While in this predicament, they were counter-attacked by the enemy with terrible effect. When the 125th advanced, it was almost obliterated, and it was only saved from total annihilation because it was held up in a bog full of barbed wire and could advance no farther. Havildar Jasvant Singh, a noted regimental athlete, waded out twenty yards beyond anyone else, when he was trapped in hidden wire entanglements and killed. With his death perished the last surviving Rajput in the regiment;[1] the Rajputs of the 125th had indeed lived up to their ancestral traditions. At last the tiny remnant, now reduced to four British officers and eighty men, received orders to retire, a telephone line having been laid, with great skill and daring, by a private of the Leicesters to where Battalion Headquarters were standing in the bog. The conduct of the regiment in these trying circumstances was superb. Havildar (afterwards Jamadar) Sher Khan was shot through both jaws. Then he was wounded twice again, in the arm and lung. But it was only when he received a fifth bullet in the knee that he consented to *walk* back to the first-aid post.[2] This hero, who received the I.O.M., subsequently died of wounds in Palestine. Subedar-Major Munshi Singh, who was killed at the head of his men, was described as an officer who did not know what fear was. He had been recommended for the V.C. and five times for the I.O.M., and was posthumously awarded the latter decoration, together with the I.D.S.M. This gave rise to a touching incident. At an investiture held in Bombay early in 1918, his widow and two little sons were brought down from Peshawar by Jamadar Sher Khan, who, having received his I.O.M., took the two

[1] The battalion normally contained two companies of Rajputs. This gives some idea of the casualty list.

[2] Edmund Candler's *The Long Road to Baghdad*, i, pp. 205–6.

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boys up to His Excellency the Governor to receive their father's medals. The English are not an emotional race, but few present were entirely unmoved as this war-scarred veteran led the sons of his dead comrade-in-arms forward. And it speaks volumes for the splendid *camaraderie* of the regiment that a Hindu widow should entrust herself and her children, for this long journey from the distant north, to a Muhammadan. Both these two men were as popular with each other's co-religionists as with their own. On the death of Subedar Munshi Singh, Sweeper Itarsi snatched up a rifle and bandolier, joining the front line, and fought for the rest of the day. On returning to his duties, he was given the honorary rank of Jamadar by his brethren, and actually acted as such, though he was very junior.

With the failure to carry the Sannayat position, and the sinking of the *Jalnar* on the 24th, when that vessel made a forlorn effort to run the blockade, the fate of Kut was sealed; 21,000 men had already been sacrificed in a vain attempt to relieve 9,000, and behind Sannayat lay the Sinn position. The stars in their courses had fought against us, and when success seemed at last to be within our grasp, the weather broke, the river rose, and flood and marsh made the narrow bottle-neck, through which we had to advance, practically impregnable. On April 29th Townshend surrendered, and a general armistice was arranged. The regiment was in the front line at the time, and Lieuts. Hughes and Maltby took it in turns to sit between the lines with a white flag. The Turkish officer who came out was a machine-gunner who had been decorated for bravery in leading the counter-attack which drove us out of Hanna on January 21st. He was a cultured man, who had spent most of his life in Paris. By a strange coincidence, this officer was captured at almost identically the same spot by Lieut. Hughes in 1917! During all this period, we had patrols out all night to prevent treachery. The Turks did the same, and they often got mixed up, with rather comical results.

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And so the curtain rang down upon the long-drawn tragedy of Kut-el-Amara. Not since Cornwallis surrendered to the Americans at Saratoga, had such a disaster befallen British arms; and not since the annihilation of Elphinstone's army in Afghanistan in 1842, had the Indian Army received such a crushing blow. Liman von Sanders, the German Staff Officer lent to the Turkish Army, pressed the Turks at once to assume the offensive against our sorely-shaken troops; and had this been done, further disasters might have ensued. But the enemy had lost very heavily; he was threatened by the menace of General Baratoff's enterprising little force of Cossacks, which hovered around his left flank, and on May 19th, he withdrew from the Sinn position, which we occupied.

And now the Mesopotamian hot weather settled down upon the country, immobilizing both armies, and reducing friend and foe to a state of helpless impotence. Week after week, the thermometer rose, until it stood at 135° in the tents. A plague of flies made life almost unbearable; fever, heat-stroke, dysentery and scurvy decimated the troops, and 2,500 a month were evacuated from the Shaikh Saad clearing-hospital. Little happened to relieve the monotony of those dreadful months; the only event of importance occurred on June 10th, when the Turks succeeded in blowing up a string of ammunition barges with shell-fire. These exploded with a terrific detonation close to the quarters of the 125th, and the sepoys were employed for a considerable time in the difficult and dangerous work of salvage. The whole battalion was all but wiped out by a huge piece of iron, 30 feet long, which whizzed through the air about two feet from the ground. The ordeal was a trying one, the countryside all round being littered with ammunition of every description, which went on exploding for three days.

But, in the meanwhile, the work of reorganization was going on, slowly but surely. Britain had been at last awakened to her responsibilities in the east; ship-

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loads of supplies began to pour into Basra; a light railway was constructed from our base at Shaikh Saad to our advanced position at Sinn; and, above all, General Sir Stanley Maude was appointed General Officer Commanding the British Forces in Mesopotamia. Maude laboured without ceasing in his task of reorganizing the army and restoring its *morale*, and by the advent of the cold weather of 1916–17, it was at last a fine fighting force of four full divisions, its depleted ranks filled up, well supplied with guns and ammunition, and burning to retrieve its failures.[1] The plan of operations now adopted differed radically from those of the previous year. The Sannayat position could not be stormed without great loss; but it might be turned. General Maude's idea was a brilliant one. His main force was to push up the right bank of the Tigris, mopping up the 'pockets' of enemy troops in the bends of the river, cross the Shatt-el-Hai south of Kut, and finally the Tigris at the Dahra bend, far in rear of the Turkish forces at Sannayat, who would thus be cut off. These operations were to be carried out by the 3rd Army Corps, consisting of the 13th and 14th Divisions, while the 7th Division pinned the enemy to his ground at Sannayat itself. The offensive opened on December 13th. While intense bombardments and feint attacks on the left bank kept the Turks occupied and manning their trenches, the cavalry and the 3rd Corps pushed on to the Hai. Fierce fighting took place at the loop of the Tigris known as Mahomed Abdul Hussan, just north of Kut, on December 22nd. This peninsula was not evacuated until January 18th; the Hai bridgehead fell with the capture of the Liquorice Factory (famous in the annals of the siege of Kut) on February 10th, after a prolonged and desperate struggle, and

[1] The 125th was brought up to strength. A draft of 186 men arrived on May 2nd; 118 and 2 Indian officers, on August 2nd; 58 on September 29th; and 93 on October 29th. Total, 455 and 2 Indian officers. The cadre of British officers was also brought up to strength.

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finally, on the 23rd, the force crossed the Tigris at Shumran, east of the Dahra bend, and gained a footing on the left bank.

And now, on February 21st, the 19th Brigade received their long-expected orders to attack Sannayat. For nearly two months the Turks had been subjected to an almost continuous bombardment, which now increased to hurricane violence. Under cover of the guns, the Seaforth Highlanders and 92nd Panjabis went over the top, with the 125th in close support. The first line was carried without difficulty; in the second, the Panjabis received an unexpected check, and Captain Odell, who went forward with C company of the 125th to reinforce them, was unfortunately killed. At the same time, Captain Macdonald was wounded for the third time. The troops occupied the ground captured on the 23rd, despite a heavy Turkish bombardment. On the 24th patrols pushed forward and found Sannayat unoccupied! The enemy, menaced in his rear, had vanished into thin air, and the famous position, in front of which the regiment had sat since April, 1916, and which had caused them such immeasurable toil and bloodshed and suffering, was at last in our hands. The pursuit was now taken hotly up, and the 125th marched 105 miles in seven days. Of these forced marches, Captain Rees, who joined the regiment after the fall of Kut, has some amusing incidents to relate.

'The marching was very heavy and became automatic. On the whole the men were fit, in spite of many months of continuous trench warfare. There were no men who fell out from the 125th Rifles. True, on many occasions, one had to coax, adjure and bully. The British and Indian officers carried greatcoats and rifles, etc., for the men. The weaker ones were occasionally hoisted on to officers' horses, but the result in the end was that everyone got there. One amusing feature of these marches was the evidence of the personality of Colonel Keily, fondly known by all the men as *Baba*. One would

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be encouraging an exhausted sepoy who vowed he could not move another step, when Colonel Keily's voice could be heard as he approached down the marching fours in the dark. The effect was electric. Would-be "fall-outs" hastily grabbed their rifles and greatcoats from kind helpers, tired sepoys scrambled off officers' horses and all stepped out as though they were just passing off the square from recruits' final parade. "Old Keily's" influence was really electric. His personality could carry not only himself, but also the whole of his regiment, through the most tremendous fatigue. On one occasion, officers and men were asleep while they marched. The column of fours presented a most drunken aspect and yet kept together. Colonel Keily nearly fell off his horse three times, so gave up riding and marched at the head of the regiment. Immediately in front of us were the 92nd Panjabis, who had put their regimental mules at the rear of the regiment, and naturally the last mule was the biggest *badmash* of all. During one of the many checks in the dark Colonel Keily walked straight into the last mule of the 92nd Panjabis. It lived up to its reputation and with both hind legs lifted the Colonel into the ranks behind him. Fortunately, the mule was much too close to do any real damage and, except for causing the Colonel much discomfort, with the result of his damning all through the night, there were no bad after-effects.'

But the Turk never made another serious stand. The victorious army, cavalry, armoured cars, gunboats, and, last of all, the patient plodding infantry, upon whom had fallen the burden of the year's bloody fighting, swept on and on, past Kut, past Aziziyeh, past Ctesiphon, with all their bitter memories. Nothing could stop them now. The Lancashire Regiment added fresh laurels to its fame at the crossing of the Diala River, and early on March 11th the victorious British Army marched into Bagdad. Kut was avenged.

But, unfortunately, to stop at Bagdad, a huge straggling oriental city, destitute of defences natural or

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artificial, was impossible. The Turks were defeated, but not broken, and it was necessary to prevent them from rallying. The 13th Turkish Army Corps, engaged with the Russians on our right flank in the Hamadan district, must be intercepted and prevented from joining hands with the defeated 18th Corps; and the Tigris and Euphrates had to be cleared of enemy forces, who might at any time burst the dams and flood the country. But our main strategic objective was, of course, the enemy's railhead at Samarrah, on the Tigris, due north of Bagdad. Until this was taken the city could never be safe, and here there was reason to suppose the enemy would fight to the last gasp. For this purpose, Maude divided his force into three columns. The Euphrates Column, consisting of the 7th Brigade, was to advance up that river to Ramadie, mopping up the small enemy forces in that region, protecting our left flank, and securing the Saklawie dam. The Khanikin Column, consisting of the 8th and 9th Brigades, was to march up the Diala River, secure our right flank, and drive the 13th Turkish Corps back upon the Russians. Meanwhile, our main force proceeded to march up the Tigris to Samarrah, the 7th Division on the right bank, following the railway, and the 3rd Army Corps, under General Marshall, consisting of the 13th and 14th Divisions, on the left. On March 14th the Turks were driven from a position astride the railway line at Mushaidie after fierce fighting. On the 29th the troops on the left bank of the Tigris defeated the Turkish 13th Corps, which had outmanœuvred General Keary, and attacked our right flank at Dogameh. On April 8th, Beled station was reached and captured after a brisk rearguard action ; here the 19th Brigade took over the position from the 28th Brigade, and the next day the 7th Division located the enemy near Harbe; the 19th Division advanced to the attack, the 125th being in the centre of the line, and successfully dislodged them.

From April 26th to 29th there was very fierce fighting on the left bank, where Ali Ihsan, the indomitable commander of the 13th Turkish Corps, again attacked

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General Marshall's army on the Adhaim river, but was decisively defeated, and retired toward the Jabel Hamrin mountains in disorder. The 7th Division was now able to push forward to Samarrah. On April 19th two columns, consisting of the 19th and 21st Brigades, located the Turks in a very strong position at Istabulat. Their entrenched line stretched from the Tigris, across the Dujaila water course, and over the railway a little to the west of Istabulat station, where it formed a re-entrant angle. As usual, the ground in front was a *glacis*, devoid of cover. On the 20th a line of redoubts on strong posts, about 2,000 yards from the enemy's position, was seized, and behind these the two brigades formed up for attack, the 19th on the south of the Dujailaoel nullah and the 21st on the north. The line was formed as follows: the 92nd Panjabis were astride the railway, their objective being Istabulat station; then came the Seaforths and the 28th Panjabis, with the 125th in close support. The attack opened on the 21st. The 19th Brigade advanced wjth great *élan*. The 92nd seized the station, while the Seaforths and 28th and A and B companies of the 125th occupied about 700 yards of the enemy's front line. Unfortunately, the losses of the 125th were very heavy. They included Lieut. C. N. Harris, acting Adjutant,[1] and 25 rank and file killed, and Lieut. H. Percy-Jones and 204 rank and file wounded. Captain Hughes had his wrist-watch broken by a bullet. Meanwhile fierce hand-to-hand fighting was taking place across the Dujaila, the Black Watch and Gurkhas getting home with bayonet and *kukri* and giving no quarter. The Turks fell back upon their main position during the night, but by this time the 28th Brigade had come up, and, passing through the lines of the 19th, it assaulted, with the 19th in support. Fighting was now of a very determined character, attack being followed by counter-attack, and the 125th Rifles reinforced the 56th at nightfall. But the next day the Turks

[1] On his death, he was succeeded by Captain Rees as Adjutant.

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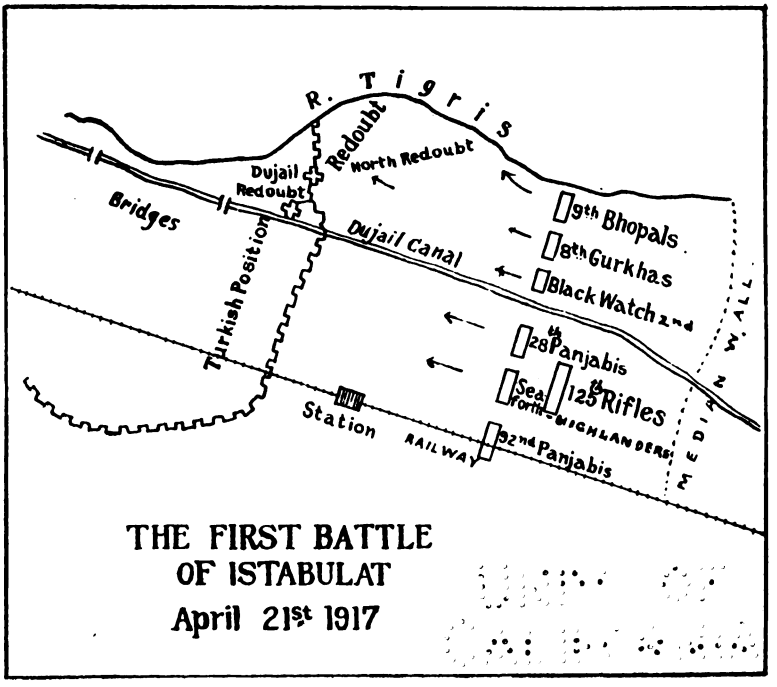

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were in full retreat on Tekrit. Samarrah, the key to Bagdad, with an immense quantity of stores and rolling stock which the enemy had not been able to destroy, fell into our hands.

With the fall of Samarrah and the approach of the hot weather, operations once more came to a standstill. The next six months were spent in reorganization, and bringing the regiment up to strength and training new drafts. In October news came that the Turks had formed a basis at Tekrit on the Tigris and from there had advanced to El Huweslat, eight miles north of Samarrah. The 7th Division accordingly moved out to attack them. On October 24th we captured El Huweslat, whereupon the enemy fell back ten miles to Maashad-ad-Dauz. Here, too, they were quickly turned out, and fell back, hotly pursued by our men, to their main position on Tekrit. This had been elaborately entrenched, with both flanks resting on the Tigris, and the country in front was intersected by nullahs and very intricate. The attack opened on November 5th, the 8th Brigade leading, with the 19th in support. At about 10.45 a.m., the 8th Brigade was held up, whereupon the Seaforths and the 125th moved up to their left. At 4 o'clock, under heavy artillery covering fire, these two regiments assaulted and carried the trenches at the point of the bayonet. They then pursued the retreating Turks, killing many and taking prisoners. After dark our patrols pushed ahead, and found Tekrit evacuated. Vast quantities of stores, ammunition dumps and an aerodrome were found partly destroyed, and the enemy's attempt to retake Samarrah, for which he had been accumulating materials for the past six months, was thus completely frustrated. The following day the troops were delighted to receive the following appreciative message from the Brigade Commander:

'It is with the greatest pleasure that the Brigade Commander congratulates all units of the brigade on their gallantry during the attack on the Turkish posi-

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tions at Tekrit. The advance was steadily and continuously pressed, in spite of heavy and accurate artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire. The advance of the Seaforth Highlanders and the 125th Rifles was a fine sight. The brigade has worthly maintained, as well as increased, its reputation.'

In this action Jamadar Birbal Ram and 18 Indian other ranks were killed, and Captain H. S. M. Macentire and 108 men were wounded. With the capture of Tekrit the epic story of the 125th in Mesopotamia draws to a close. Since they had landed, two years previously, they had been almost continuously in the trenches. At Shaikh Saad, at Hanna, in the bloody shambles of Sannayat, in the long and weary wait which had preceded the advance to Bagdad, as well as in the advance and after, they had added fresh laurels to those reaped by their predecessors in Sind and Central India. Time after time they had been practically wiped out; on one occasion they had come out of the trenches with four officers and eighty men.

On November 15th their active service in Mesopotamia came to a close. The 7th Division, on relief by the 3rd, fell back by easy stages to Hinaidi rest-camp. The cold was intense, and a strange contrast to conditions six months ago, when officers and men lay all day helpless in their tents, heads and bodies wrapped in wet towels. Now water froze in bomb buckets, and everyone was glad to huddle behind the steamer's funnels! *Drabis* actually succumbed to the climate. Kut was reached on December 23rd, and Basra on January 8th, 1918. Here the 125th embarked for Egypt by the *Palamcottah*, on the 10th, and Mesopotamia, with all its proud and tragic memories, receded into the past for ever.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER VIII

For authorities, see the note at the end of the succeeding chapter.

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THE GREAT WAR (*Continued*)

WITH ALLENBY IN PALESTINE

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CALIFORNIA

SUBEDAR MAJOR AND HONORARY CAPTAIN
JAGANATH PANDE, SIRDAR BAHADUR

SUBEDAR MAJOR AND HONORARY CAPTAIN ALLA
DAD KHAN, I.D.S.M., MEDAILLE MILITAIRE

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CHAPTER IX

WITH ALLENBY IN PALESTINE

THE *Palamcottah* reached Suez on the 26th, after an uneventful voyage, and the troops moved into a rest-camp close to Ismailia. To the war-worn officers, who had not seen a tree, a stone or a woman's face for many months, the delights of club-life, with tennis, dancing and bathing, and Cairo within a few hours' reach, seemed almost too good to be true. Training of new drafts now went on almost continuously, and the regiment's sadly depleted ranks were brought up to full strength, namely, 13 British and 17 Indian officers, and 921 other ranks. But the spell of rest was all too brief, and very soon the 125th was on its way to the Palestine front. On March 29th, the 19th Brigade, forming part of the 7th Meerut Division, under Major-General Sir V. B. Fane, moved up to take its place in the line, where it relieved the 156th Brigade in the left sector on the coast. At this time, General Allenby's army occupied a position about four miles north of Jerusalem, which had fallen on December 9th. His right flank rested upon the Dead Sea, and ran through Jericho, across the Nablus road roughly parallel to the Jerusalem-Jaffa road, until it reached the sea north of that port. Nothing beyond the usual incidents of trench-warfare occurred until August 1st, when a party, consisting of Captain T. W. Rees, M.C., Lieut. J. B. Nelson, 2nd Lieut. G. N. Haynes, Subedar-Major Jahan Shah, Jemadars Sher Khan, I.O.M., and Allah Dad and 67 sepoys of A company set out on August 19th at 3 a.m. to carry out an important trench raid on a considerable scale. Captain Rees describes the incident graphically:

'The idea was that our raid should go up a re-entrant in no-man's-land and fall on the Turkish

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position from behind. This particular portion of the Turkish trenches was in the form of an isolated dumb-bell redoubt. One half of the attackers was to deal with the rear portion of the dumb-bell. The other half was to go through them and capture the forward part. All went well at the beginning. I was out in the middle of no-man's-land with ten men. Our job was to collect the prisoners, loot, etc., and convoy them and the wounded back into our lines. About 60 of our fellows went over, with two British officers—Nelson and Haynes—and, as far as I can remember, three Indian officers. All belonged to A company, except my party. Unfortunately, Division Headquarters would not let the raiders come straight back to the nearest portion of our line—they were only about 100 yards away. The raiders had to withdraw and retrace their steps down several hundred yards of this shelled re-entrant in no-man's-land. Our men cleared both portions of the Turkish redoubt, took a machine-gun or two and many prisoners. Unfortunately, the Turks then proceeded to shell their own trenches, while their own men and ours were fighting it out. Nelson, on his way back, found about 20 Turkish prisoners and three of his men, whom he had sent back to escort them, all stretched out dead, like the petals of a flower, a shell having landed in the middle of them and killed the whole lot. A few prisoners and wounded reached me early in the show—so did several 5·9's from the enemy! It was about this time that the Turks started to use the instantaneous fuse, and this type of burst was decidedly unpleasant. The signaller lying alongside of me about this time gave a yell and said that he had been hit by the 5·9 which had just burst, and that he had better go to hospital. I examined the poor fellow's leg and, to my amazement, found that all that had happened was that the heel of his boot had been torn off. It had been quite close enough to shake him severely. In the meanwhile the raiders had finished their task and started to come back. Unfortunately Haynes was never seen or heard of again. It was known that

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he had penetrated to the forward enemy redoubt and it is presumed that he was killed there. Subedar Allah Dad Khan greatly distinguished himself on this occasion and was wounded in the head and shoulder by a Turkish bayonet. Jamadar Sher Khan, who already had a tremendous reputation,[1] was also conspicuous, but unfortunately, as he was coming away, he was badly wounded in the knee by a Turkish bomb, and Nelson, who himself had been wounded, endeavoured to drag him out. He carried him a little distance from the enemy redoubt into a nullah, but there, as his strength was failing, Nelson had to leave him, hoping to return and rescue him later. Unfortunately, however, the Turks got him, and though we recovered him in the big push about six weeks later, gangrene had set into his knee and it was in a very bad way. He was sent down to Kantara, and a couple of months later Colonel Keily, when passing through Kantara, was called by the medical officers to persuade this strict Muhammadan to agree to the amputation of his leg. The Colonel reasoned with him for a long time, and eventually Sher Khan agreed to the amputation. But it was too late; the gangrene had secured too great a hold on his system, and the poor fellow did not recover from the anæsthetic. To return to the raid: casualties now began to pour in. As I have said, about 60 of A company went into the show, with two British and three Indian officers. They sustained about 49 casualties. All three Indian officers were hit, Sher Khan remaining in the Turkish lines; the Subedar-Major himself was mortally wounded by a terrific wound in the head, and I could do nothing to help him, and Subedar Allah Dad Khan was also hit. Haynes was missing, and Nelson, himself wounded, only just got in to me. I seized him and put him into the cover of the grass in which I and my party were lying. I had a telephone wire back to Battalion Headquarters, and rung them up to send me out urgently some

[1] See p. 155 *supra*.

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whisky in order to revive Nelson sufficiently to get him into our lines. Unfortunately, the idiot of a mess orderly, Sher Zaman, a lad of about sixteen from the Panjab, newly appointed mess orderly, instead of approaching cautiously, waltzed out from our lines into no-man's-land carrying a bottle of whisky and a jug of water and glasses on a tray. This immediately gave our position away, as the silly ass walked straight up to us, in spite of our frantic signals to him to get down into the grass and crawl. Of course, the Turks were on to us in a second. A field gun pushed whizz-bangs at speed, and the shells arrived before the report of the gun could be heard. Fortunately, I got Nelson back into our line under his own steam. But Sher Zaman, the erring mess orderly, was hit immediately, and eight out of my ten men were eventually also casualties. I myself took a shell splinter under the left arm and had my tin helmet cloth cover full of small pieces of shell. A most unpleasant morning! The whole raid would have been a great success had it not been for our bad luck after successfully dealing with the Turks in their trenches, and although we had given them a good hammering and got a machine-gun or two, we had taken such heavy casualties ourselves in doing the raid that its usefulness as a raiser of *morale* was doubtful.'

For their conduct on this occasion, Lieut. Nelson received the Military Cross, Subedar Jahan Shah and Naik Mir Hussain the Indian Order of Merit, and Colour-Havildar Madat Khan and Rifleman Nawab Khan the Indian Distinguished Service Medal.

Preparations were now being made for General Allenby's great assault, and, in spite of a severe influenza epidemic, training went on continuously. Facing the British troops were the Turkish 4th Army, astride the river Jordan; the 7th Army, astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road; and the 8th Army guarding the coast.

The British troops were slightly superior in numbers

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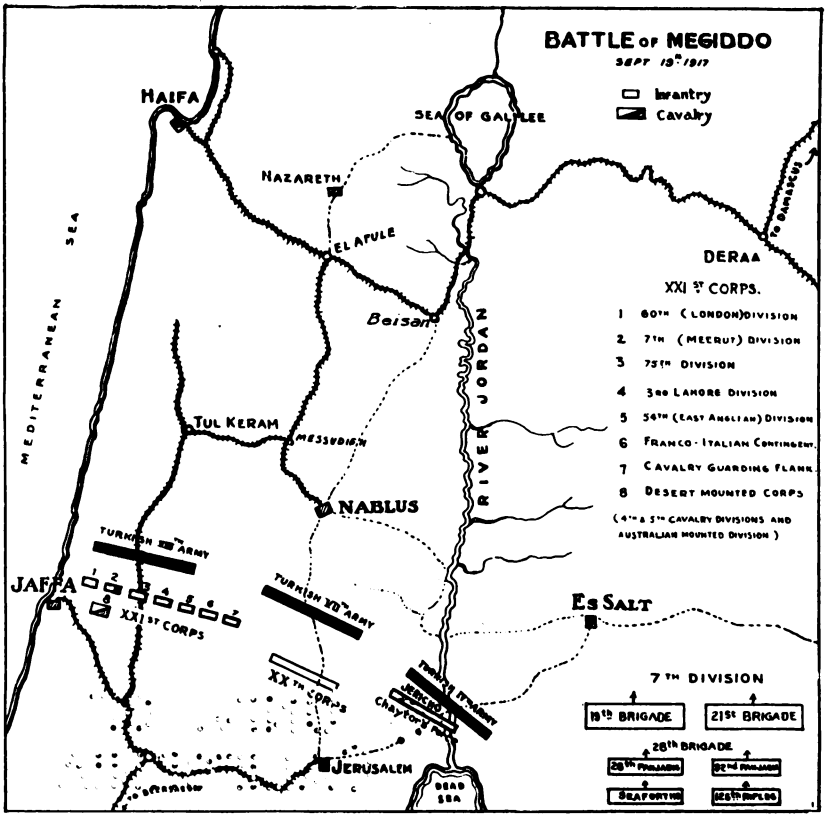

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to the enemy, but they were a heterogeneous collection, including Colonial, English, Indian, French, Armenian and Jewish units, many of Allenby's best brigades having been withdrawn to meet the crisis on the Western Front. The Indian divisions consisted of veteran troops, but they were new to the ground. Allenby's army was disposed in three bodies. General Chaytor's force faced the Turks astride the river Jordan on the right. The Turks here were strongly posted, and an advance, even if successful, would be a blow in the air in this sector. In the centre, the 20th Army Corps, across the Nablus road, would, if it advanced, strike at the heart of the Turkish communications, but the country here was hilly and difficult and offered small prospects of success. There only remained the coastal sector, where the Plain of Sharon offered unique opportunities for the employment of the large cavalry forces at the General's disposal, if a break-through could be effected. Here, too, the naval units on the coast could effectively co-operate. The Turks had always recognized the weakness of their right flank, and had endeavoured to protect it with an elaborate trench system. But this sector was selected as the most promising for attack. Allenby's scheme was to mass here a large body of troops with the utmost secrecy, and attack without any preliminary bombardment. Having broken through, the victorious troops were to pivot on their right, rolling up the right flank of the Turkish 8th Army, until they cut the Nablus road in rear of the Turkish 7th Army. Meanwhile the cavalry were to complete the overthrow by pursuit, and by attacking the enemy's lines of communications and endeavouring to capture his bases at Tulkeram, Nablus and Nazareth. While these operations were proceeding, the 20th Corps and General Chaytor's force were to pin the Turkish 7th and 4th Armies to their ground by holding attacks.

The concentration of the forces, under Lieut.-General Bulfin, was carried out with the utmost secrecy. Troops were moved by night. Camps and bivouacs were

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elaborately camouflaged. The Royal Air Force completely dominated the air, and not an enemy 'plane crossed our lines. The 125th were shifted piecemeal to some orange groves on the banks of the Aufa River. The final disposition of the troops for the attack from left to right was as follows: 60th London Division, 7th Meerut Division, 75th Division, 3rd Lahore Division, the 54th Division and a mixed detachment of French Colonials. The right flank was to be covered during its pivoting movement by an Australian Cavalry Brigade. Behind the line on the left flank were the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions (the Desert Mounted Corps) ready to break through.

The 7th Division was drawn up with the 21st and 19th Brigades in the line, and the 28th Brigade in support. The 28th and 92nd Panjabis formed the first line, and the Seaforths and the 125th the second. At 4.30 a.m., on September 19th, without the least warning, every gun in the corps opened a terrific drum-fire upon the enemy's trenches; the ships on the coast joined in, and the aeroplanes laid a dense smoke-barrage. But we will allow Captain Rees to relate the subsequent experiences of the 125th on that eventful day:

'After dark we moved about three miles nearer to the line. There we halted and had a meal until about 10.30 p.m. We all ate as heartily as we could, not knowing when we should get our next meal—if we were going to get any more meals! At about half-past ten we moved up towards the front line, and eventually, before midnight, got to a position just behind our front trenches. There we had to lie out in the open until the attack, which was which was to start about 4-30 a.m. The Leicestershire Regiment had strong patrols out in no man's-land with strict orders to keep back the Turks and to prevent any of them approaching our lines, where staff officers, etc., were laying out tapes for the attacking troops to draw up on, in no-man's-land. Had the Turks got anywhere near,

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the impending attack would have been disclosed. But the Leicesters put up a tremendous show and, although the Turks turned out to be particularly vigorous that night, they kept them off throughout. About 3.30 a.m. we commenced to move out on to the tapes. The wait in the dark, lying out in the open behind our front-line trenches, with bombing, musketry and shooting going on in no-man's-land and an occasional shell whistling overhead, was quite enough for many, and they were thoroughly glad to resume activity and to file out on to the tapes. In front of me, C company got wrong. I heard Keily and Grierson (the Adjutant) busily trying to get C company on to their right tapes. I went to Colonel Keily and, at his request, helped to put that company on to its correct alignment. No sooner had this been completed than our barrage started and the advance commenced. I had to go back and find my own company (B) and lead them forward. I, with B company, was in reserve, and my task should have been simplicity itself. I was merely to follow the others. Unfortunately, owing to the confusion over C company, B company, under me, was more than the allotted distance in rear when it started, and as we continued to advance as quickly as we could walk I failed to find any troops in front of me. However, I knew that my course was due north, and until the smoke and dust of the barrage obscured things I could see the north star, and later my compass came in very handy. I headed due north, but still failed to see any of the regiment before me. In due course we struggled through the 28th Panjabis in the enemy first line. Still no sign of the 125th! So I went on. A Turkish pony now became available and I enjoyed myself thoroughly, riding on this pony, and directing my company from the great advantage which a mount can afford. By this time we had reached the farthermost limits of the 28th Panjabis, and here we said good-bye to Major St. John Browne, their commandant. A party of Turks on a hill to our right front temporarily held up the advance, but my B company of Bharatpur

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Jat recruits needed little encouragement, and charged the hill, capturing the lot in fine style. On we went. Still no sign of the regiment! But by this time I had collected a motley crew of some men from C Company, some 8th Gurkhas, one or two Highlanders from the Black Watch, and some men of the 28th and 92nd Panjabis. All these I welcomed, and we pushed on. Our goal was definitely north. Our barrage was going on before us, and there was only one thing to do—advance. Unfortunately, about this time we advanced too quick and got into our own barrage. Some of the men would have preferred to retire a little and get out of it, but such a move was dangerous, as, once a retirement started, it would be difficult to stop at all; and so, with a little persuasion, we stayed where we were until the barrage moved on. We followed it. Priestley appeared at about this stage, having lost his company. Him I took in charge and put in command of the left sector of my troops. We went on, and presently a body of Turks faced our left flank. Priestley advanced towards them and got very close before he was held up. Fortunately, at this stage, we were able to help him with Lewis-gun fire from our right flank, and in went Priestley, capturing the whole of his opponents, who included a regimental commander and staff. About this time, to my amazement, I saw two Turkish guns, limbered up, galloping away before me. The night before, when the Colonel had been showing the presumed Turkish position on the maps, he had pointed out one or two gun positions, and I was much ragged when I said, "I wonder whether we will get near any guns to-morrow?" Fortunately, another Turkish pony was at hand, and, bidding the company follow up, I went after them. Going round the corner of a hill, I met a Turkish cadet on a better pony, which I commandeered. When he had dismounted and I was about to mount his charge, he displayed an unusual desire to obtain possession of my revolver. So I was reluctantly compelled to give him a left and right with my fists and

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a right with the revolver, which I was then able to draw from its holster. It was most uncanny to see him sit down after the shot, with a neat black hole over the heart in his khaki tunic, just as bullet holes show up on khaki range targets. I hope he was taken in to our hospital and recovered, but had no time to investigate. So on I went. In due course the Turkish battery commander and staff and the personnel of a whole battery, together with machine-guns, two howitzers in position, and the two which were already limbered up, fell into our hands. The Turkish battery commander could not help it (with a revolver in his right ear). He could not speak English and I could not speak Turkish, but many loud oaths and much funny business with the revolver had a wonderful effect, and the guns were ours. The teams were shot, to prevent any possibility of removal of the guns should a counter-attack materialize.[1]

'A low ridge confronted us and, having seized this, we got one more field gun, which was abandoned immediately to our front in the middle of one of the passages across the marshes. These very passages had been the battalion's objective for the day! Here I reorganized the troops I had, commanded the passages, pushed on a few reconnaissance troops, and began to look round. Later on I got into touch with the regiment. They had kept in touch with the Seaforths on their right. The Seaforths had been following the 92nd, who had edged away to the right of their line of advance on account of a similar movement on the part of the division on their right. Hence my not finding touch with the regiment when I, with B company, moved due north according to the original plan. We were soon concentrated and later moved forward towards the hills to the east, where, absolutely dead beat, we concentrated with the whole division and slept the night bivouacked in the open. Next morning, about dawn, the advance was

[1] Captain Rees omits to mention that he received a D.S.O. for this feat!

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resumed into the foot of the hills. The 28th Brigade was supposed to be ahead of us, but fortunately Colonel Keily was moving in correct formation when a staff officer rode up and explained that, owing to a miscarriage of orders, there were no British troops between us and the Turks. At this moment our front parties bumped the Turks. They fell back and we pushed on in pursuit. Following up, we eventually began to scale a hill. At the top of the hill was a typical white-looking Palestine village, Beitlidd, and as we got within about a thousand yards of it we were greeted by a volley of shells from a high-velocity mountain-gun. Fortunately, they all went over us, but we soon got into very heavy and accurate machine-gun fire, incurring many casualties, Chouler being about the first to be hit. We eventually forced our way up on to a small ridge within about 600 yards of the village. Beyond this we could not advance. The Turks had the range to an inch, and it was certain death to expose one's self over the skyline. Unfortunately, at this stage Nelson was shot through the abdomen. He sent to tell me, and I went up and got the poor fellow down. Unfortunately, he died, due to the rough passage he experienced, being carried with an abdominal wound on a camel cacolet all the way back to Tulkeram. Very soon after, Priestley endeavoured to show one of his Lewis gunners how to put up neutralizing fire. Priestley with his Lewis gun was knocked, literally, head over heels, and again I was summoned, this time to find Priestley with six to eight bullet wounds, mostly round the face, hand and chest. Casualties continued to pile up, but we could not advance; and so the Seaforths were ordered up on our right and we were to continue the advance when they drew level with us. But unfortunately, after taking colossal casualties, particularly in officers, they only managed to draw up in line with us and a further advance was out of the question. A stalemate followed for most of the day. The 21st Brigade extended our line to the right, but the Turks held on, and, as no mountain artillery was

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available until well on into the afternoon, nothing could be done. The next day the guns came up, and the 28th stormed the village, with very little loss.'

And now the hunt was up. The 60th Londons had crumpled up the enemy's right flank, and through this open door the cavalry were streaming in long lines in hot pursuit. The moment for which the mounted troops had prayed for three long years had come at last, and they galloped, almost without drawing rein, onwards to Tulkeram, and from Tulkeram to Nazareth, where they completely surprised the whole of the Turkish General Headquarters Staff, the great Liman von Sanders himself only just escaping! Meanwhile the 21st Corps was wheeling to the right, and the Turkish 8th Army was breaking up; the panic quickly spread to the 7th and 4th Armies, which were being hotly attacked, and now found themselves threatened in rear. By the 21st the whole three Turkish armies were in full retreat. Amid burning stores and exploding ammunition dumps, the enemy fled northwards in wild confusion. And now the aeroplanes completed what the cavalry had begun. Bombs were dropped from a low altitude upon the masses of fugitives trapped in the defiles of the Nablus road, until for miles it was littered with corpses, guns, abandoned lorries and other vehicles, completely blocking it. The valley for miles was a shambles, and the road had to be cleared of debris and corpses in order that the pursuers might advance. The Turkish army in Palestine had, by September 24th, ceased to exist. The casualties to the 125th in two days' fighting were, unfortunately, heavy. They were:

Died of wounds	..	Lieut. J. B. Nelson, M.C.
Wounded ..	..	,, H. Binney
		,, E. B. Priestly
Indian Other Ranks	..	Killed, 20
		Wounded, 200

The 19th Brigade now formed part of a column which was ordered to push on along the coast, by forced

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marches, to Beyrut and Tripoli. Beyrut was finally reached on October 10th, the troops having passed, in the earlier parts of their journey, more roads littered with debris and corpses and thousands of prisoners. They also met many Jewish families returning to their homes, dressed in gala attire in honour of the victory. Beyrut itself, however, was in a tragic condition. The Turks had denuded the town of food; corpses were lying in the streets, and men, women and children clawed and fought for orange peel, banana skins and other garbage thrown aside by the troops. After a short halt, to reorganize and rest man and beast, the brigade marched on Tripoli, which was reached on October 18th. On the 31st an armistice was granted to the Turks, which was extended to a general cessation of hostilities on November 11th.

On December 9th Sir Edmund Allenby inspected the regiment in camp near Beyrut, and on January 13th he made his state entry into the town. The following message from him was received by the 125th:

'I wish to express my thanks to all of you for all you have done in Palestine and Syria. You came from Mesopotamia to an unknown country, and you adapted yourselves marvellously and quickly to your new and novel surroundings. In the advance, by your bravery, good training, and endurance, you helped to gain one of the most complete victories known in history, and in a week completely to defeat the Turk. I thank you one and all, and congratulate you with all my heart on your splendid services, to your country and to me personally.'

On February 10th the regiment was inspected by the Brigadier, 19th Brigade, General W. Leslie, D.S.O., and on March 12th by the Corps Commander. From April 15th, 1919, to March 20th, 1920, the 125th was stationed in Egypt, where it earned high praise for its smartness and soldierly bearing. General Goringe, G.O.C. 10th Division, who inspected it on August 11th, wrote:

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'The G.O.C. 10th Division was pleased with the smart turn-out of all ranks on this morning's inspection. He also compliments the regiment on the turn-out of all the guards.'

On January 2nd, 1920, the following message from the G.O.C. 7th Division was received:

'As the 7th Division is going to be dispersed, I write these few lines of farewell to every officer, British and Indian, in the Division. Its record during the War has been magnificent. In France, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria it has always been in the front line, and always distinguished itself. Since the Armistice it has had a rough time, and constant changes of camps and stations in all weathers. Every hardship and change has been cheerfully borne. I think I can safely say the record of the Division has been second to none. I thank you all and wish every officer and man good-bye and God-speed in the future. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your loyalty and work done for me, your fortunate Divisional Commander; fortunate to have such gallant officers and men under my command. I think I may say with pride that, thanks to my staff, I have never failed you as a commander, and not one of you has ever failed me in pluck, gallantry and soldierly qualities. God-speed and good luck to every man of you. Don't forget your Divisional Commander, who is very sad at parting with so many friends and comrades.'

On the 20th March the regiment arrived at Suez, where it received the following message from Sir Edmund Allenby:

'On your departure from Egypt and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, please express to all ranks my high appreciation of the services they have rendered and their admirable spirit and conduct in all circumstances. Your battalion has worthily upheld the fighting traditions of the Indian Army. I thank you, and wish you a safe return to India.'

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On June 7th the regiment embarked on the S.S. *Northbrooke*, reaching Bombay on the 20th, after an absence from India of six years on active service. Here they received the following message of welcome from H.E. the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir C. C. Munro, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G.:

'On your return from field service overseas to India, H.E. the Commander-in-Chief extends to you, and all ranks under your command, his heartiest welcome, and congratulates all on the gallantry and devotion with which they have maintained the high traditions of the army.'

In reply to the above, the following message was sent to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief:

'On behalf of myself and all ranks under my command, please convey to H.E. the Commander-in-Chief our most grateful thanks for his hearty welcome on our arrival in India after six years' field service. We are proud that H.E. the Commander-in-Chief is satisfied with the manner in which we have done our duty.

'(*Sd.*) A. M. M. CHEEKE, *Major*,
'*Commanding 1/125th Napier's Rifles.*'

This is a fitting place at which to close this narrative. In it I have endeavoured, very imperfectly I fear, to trace the history of a great company of faithful men, of many castes and creeds, but one in their loyalty to their regiment, who for over a century have fought, and often died for the British Raj, and for the officers who trained and led them, in all parts of the world—in Sind and Central India, the Abyssinian mountains, the jungles of Burma, the frozen trenches of France, the arid plains of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Palestine. That we could find such men ready to fight and die for us is, in itself, a vindication of our government in the east.

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AND SOME THERE BE, WHICH HAVE NO MEMORIAL:
WHO ARE PERISHED AS THOUGH THEY HAD NOT BEEN,
AND ARE BECOME AS THOUGH THEY HAD NOT BEEN BORN.

* * * * *

THEIR GLORY SHALL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT.
THEIR BODIES WERE BURIED IN PEACE,
AND THEIR NAME LIVETH TO ALL GENERATIONS.

AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER IX

For the Mesopotamian Campaign, the chief source of information is the Official Account, by Brigadier-General F. J. Moberley, C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., in four volumes. For a general historical outline, I have followed Edward Dane's *British Campaigns in the Near East.* Caldwell's *Life of General Maude* and Edmund Candler's *Long Road to Baghdad* are full of valuable information. For the later stages of the Palestine Campaign the official account was not available when this volume went to press. W. T. Massey's *Allenby's Final Triumph* gives an excellent outline of the final phase of operations in Palestine by an experienced war correspondent. Colonel A. P. Wavell's *The Palestine Campaigns* (London, 1928) is the best professional account, and contains excellent maps and a good bibliography. But throughout this and the preceding chapter, I have depended chiefly upon regimental records and diaries, and reminiscences kindly supplied to me by those who were serving with the regiment at the time. To all who have been good enough to assist me in this respect, and especially to Captain T. W. Rees, M.C., D.S.O., Military Secretary to H.E. the Lieut.-Governor of Burma, who furnished me with a complete account of his experiences, based upon diaries kept at the time, I tender my sincere thanks.

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APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX I

THE 6TH RAJPUTANA RIFLES

The 6th Rajputana Rifles, Colonel-in-Chief, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall, K.G., K.T., K.P., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., M.C., consists of six linked battalions, viz.:

1st Battalion, Wellesley's Rifles (late 104th Wellesley's Rifles).

2nd Battalion, Prince of Wales' Own (late 120th P.W.O. Rajputana Infantry).

3rd Battalion (late 122nd Rajputana Infantry).

4th Battalion, Outram's (late 123rd Outram's Rifles).

5th Battalion, Napier's (late 125th Napier's Rifles).

10th Battalion, Shekhawati (late 13th Rajputs).

The 4th and 5th Battalions were raised, after the Battle of Kirkee, from the loyal sepoys of Ford's Subsidiary Brigade of the Peshwa's Army, then disbanded (the Dapuri Brigade).

The titles held by the 5th Battalion at different times are as follows:

1820, 1st Extra Battalion, Native Infantry.

1826, 25th Regiment, Bombay Native Infantry.

1858, 25th Regiment, Native Light Infantry.

1885, 25th Regiment, Bombay Light Infantry.

1889, 3rd Battalion Bombay Rifle Regiment.

Corrected to 25th Regiment (3rd Battalion Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry.

1901, 25th Bombay Rifles.

1903, 125th Napier's Rifles.

1922, Present designation.

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APPENDIX II

NOTABLE EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE REGIMENT

November 7th, 1817, Lt.-Colonel Ford joined Colonel Burr's force with his brigade at the Battle of Kirkee. The regiment was formed out of Ford's brigade after the battle, with the title of the First Extra Battalion.

May 24th, 1820, became a regular regiment.

November 21st, 1824, to January 19th, 1825, the regiment took part in the operations connected with the destruction of the fortress of Kittur.

September 26th, 1826, designated 'The 25th Regiment N.I.' The Light Company proceeded on field service to Kolhapur, September, 1827.

December, 1827, the regiment was broken up into small detachments, and was engaged in the pursuit of insurgent Ramoshis, in the vicinity of Purandhar, returning to Satara in June, 1828.

April, 1839, the Grenadier, Light, and No. 1 Companies were sent to Satara on field service, returning therefrom in December of the same year.

August, 1840, left for Sind.

December 1st, 1840, action at Kotra.

March, 1842, the Light Company marched for Kandahar with the Light Battalion, and took part on the 28th of this month in the storming of a hill in the Pishin valley, called Haikalzai.

April, 1842, the regiment joined the force under Major-General England, K.H., and marched to Kandahar, where it was engaged until August.

December, 1842, marched with Major-General Sir C. J. Napier, K.C.B., on field service in Sind.

February 17th, 1843	..	..	..	Battle of Meeanee
March 24th, 1843	..	..	..	Battle of Hyderabad
April 3rd, 1843	..	..	..	Capture of Umarkot

May 27th, 1843, a small detachment of the regiment, under Ensign Lowry (numbering about 100), routed 400 or 500 of the enemy at Laki Pass.

February 9th, 1857, the Light Company proceeded on active service to Persia, and took part in the capture of the fort of Mohamrah, March 26th, 1857.

The regiment embarked for service in Persia, but, peace being declared, was recalled from sea.

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June 8th, 1857, left Poona for Aurangabad to assist in the suppression of the Mutiny at that place. This was the commencement of the regiment's services in the Mutiny, the chief events only being here shown:

July 19th to 22nd, 1857	Capture of Pauri
August 2nd, 1857	Relief of Mhow

October 22nd to 31st, 1857, operations which led to the capture of Dhar.

November 21st–22nd, 1857	Action at Mandesar
November 23rd–24th, 1857	Action at Goraria
January 1st, 1858	Indore invested

On February 8th, 1858, the regiment marched for Central India, in charge of Siege Train 1st Brigade C.I.F.F., under the command of Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K.C.B.

March 6th	Action at Futtiahbad
March 17th	Capture of Fort of Chanderi
March 20th to April 1st ..	Action in front of Jhansi
April 2nd to 5th	Operations which led to the capture of Jhansi
May 2nd	Action at Kunch
May 5th	Action at Lohari
May 18th to 20th	Operations near Golauli
May 22nd–23rd	Action at Kalpi

June 16th–20th. Operations which ended in the capture of Gwalior. (Lieut. Rose killed; Lieut. Waller gained the Victoria Cross.)

November 1st, 1858. India passed under the immediate control of the Crown.

November 29th, 1858, the regiment was constituted a Light Infantry Regiment for its distinguished services during the Mutiny.

December 16th, 1867, the regiment left for service in Abyssinia, returning therefrom in July, 1868.

June, 1886, to April, 1888, the regiment was on active service in Burma, engaged in operations with the Upper Burma Field Force.

November 11th, 1888, the regiment was ordered to be styled 'The Rifle Regiment (3rd Battalion).'

January 21st, 1890, the regiment was ordered to be styled: 'The 25th Regiment (3rd Battalion Rifle Regiment) of Bombay Infantry.'

April 1st, 1895, the regiment was ordered to be composed of classes as at present constituted.

September 28th, 1901, the official designation of the regiment changed to '25th Bombay Rifles.'

October 8th, 1903, the regiment received the title, '125th Napier's Rifles.'

August 8th, 1914, the regiment received orders to mobilize, war having been declared between England, France, Russia and Italy, against Germany, Austria and (later) Turkey.

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August 24th, 1914, the regiment left Bombay in a convoy, and arrived at Suez on the 9th September, 1914.

November 30th, 1914, the regiment landed in France, where they took part in the following battles:

December 20th–21st, 1914	..	Givenchy
March 10th–13th, 1915	..	Neuve Chapelle
May 9th, 1915	..	Aubers Ridge
May 15th–25th, 1915	..	Festubert

After the last battle the regiment returned to Egypt.

December 23rd, 1915, the regiment arrived in Mesopotamia, where Kut-el-Amara was besieged, and joined the 19th Brigade of the 7th Division. In Mesopotamia they took part in the following:

January 7th, 1916	..	Battle of Shaikh Saad
January 13th, 1916	..	Action of the Wadi
January 21st, 1916	..	Action of El Hanna
April 5th, 1916 ..	..	Capture of El Hanna
April 6th–7th, 1916	..	First action at Sannayat
April 22nd, 1917 ..	..	Second action at Sannayat
February 22nd, 1917	..	Third action and Capture of Sannayat
March 11th, 1917 ..	..	Capture of Bagdad
April 21st and 22nd, 1917	..	Action of Istabulat
November 5th, 1917	..	Battle of Tekrit

January 10th, 1918, the regiment left Mesopotamia for Palestine, still as part of the 7th Division.

June, 1918, 2/125th Rifles formed.

September 19th, 1918, Battle of Megiddo, and operations ending in the defeat of the Turks.

October 18th, 1918, the regiment reached Tripoli, in pursuit of the Turks.

October 30th, 1918, the Turks were granted an armistice.

November 11th, 1918, a General Armistice was concluded, which ended the War.

March 25th, 1919, the regiment returned to Egypt.

May 10th, 1919, the regiment proceeded to Luxor and Assuan, for the suppression of riots.

June, 1919, the 2/125th proceeded to Waziristan on active service, returning to Poona in February, 1920.

March, 1920, the 2/125th regiment proceeded to Mesopotamia, taking part in the suppression of the Arab rebellion. No. 1 Company was besieged in Sumawa throughout the siege.

June 19th, 1920, the 1/125th returned to India, after six years' active service abroad.

February 9th, 1922, the regiment arrived in Waziristan, for operations against the Mahsuds and pacification of the country.

June, 1922, the 2/125th Rifles were disbanded.

December 1st, 1922 the designation of the battalion was changed to 5th Battalion, 6th Rajputana Rifles (Napier's).

March, 1924, the regiment left Waziristan.

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APPENDIX III

LIST OF STATIONS AT WHICH THE 125TH NAPIER'S RIFLES HAVE BEEN QUARTERED SINCE THE REGIMENT WAS RAISED

STATION	FROM	TO
Sirur ..	..	April 15th, 1821
Surat ..	May 16th, 1821	December 16th, 1823
Bombay ..	January 10th, 1824	October 2nd, 1824
Dapoli ..	October 3rd, 1824	December 15th, 1826
Satara ..	December 27th, 1826	February 21st, 1829
Harsoli ..	March 14th, 1829	December 2nd, 1834
Dapoli ..	December 21st, 1834	December 8th, 1837
Poona ..	December 21st, 1837	November 27th, 1839
Bombay ..	December 3rd, 1839	August 18th, 1840
Sind Frontier Force	August 22nd, 1840	September 22nd, 1843
Karachi ..	September 25th, 1843	October, 10th, 1845
Mhow ..	January 2nd, 1846	April 7th, 1846
Malegaon ..	April 25th, 1846	January 10th, 1850
Neemuch ..	February 15th, 1850	January 9th, 1854
Ahmedabad ..	February 6th, 1854	March 17th, 1857
Poona ..	April 18th, 1857	June 8th, 1857
Central India ..	June 8th, 1857	March, 1859
Poona ..	March, 1859	November 7th, 1862
Sholapur ..	November, 1862	November, 1866
Bombay ..	November, 1866	December 16th, 1867
Abyssinia ..	December 31st, 1867	June 17th, 1868
Sholapur ..	July 8th, 1868	November 9th, 1868
Dhulia ..	November 20th, 1868	January 3rd, 1872
Mahidpur ..	January 25th, 1872	March 6th, 1874
Mhow ..	March 13th, 1874	November 21st, 1877
Aden ..	December 6th, 1877	March 6th, 1880
Bombay ..	March 16th, 1880	October 29th, 1881
Bhuj ..	November 4th, 1881	October 16th, 1884
Bombay ..	October 21st, 1884	December 31st, 1884
Belgaum ..	February 24th, 1885	November 16th, 1885
Poona ..	December 7th, 1885	April 28th, 1886
Burma Field Force	May 9th, 1886	April 6th, 1888
Neemuch ..	April 20th, 1888	November 10th, 1890
Poona ..	January 2nd, 1891	February 18th, 1896
Quetta ..	March 13th, 1896	November 28th, 1896
Sibi ..	December, 4th, 1896	February 25th, 1897
Fort Sandeman ..	March 15th, 1897	October 30th, 1897
Quetta ..	November 28th, 1897	March 2nd, 1898
Bombay ..	March 9th, 1898	February 26th, 1899
Nasirabad ..	March 2nd, 1899	January 19th, 1903
Ahmednagar ..	March 23rd, 1903	March 7th, 1906
Bangalore ..	March 9th, 1906	December 12th, 1910
Mhow ..	December 21st, 1910	August 17th, 1914

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Station	From	To
Indian Ex. Force in France, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Palestine ..	August 24th, 1914	June 19th, 1920
Ahmedabad ..	June 20th, 1920	September 6th, 1920
Bombay and Deolali	September 7th, 1920	February 9th, 1922
Waziristan Field Force ..	February 10th, 1922	March 11th, 1924
Peshawar ..	March 14th, 1924	December 28th, 1927
Ali Masjid ..	December 28th, 1927	

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APPENDIX IV

BATTLE HONOURS WON BY THE REGIMENT

Kirkee	Abyssinia
Meeanee	Burma, 1885–7
Hyderabad	Afghanistan, 1919
Central India	

The Great War

Givenchy, 1914	Megiddo
Neuve Chapelle	Sharon
Aubers	Palestine, 1917–8
Festubert, 1915	Kut-el-Amara, 1917
France and Flanders, 1914–5	Tigris, 1916
Egypt, 1915	Bagdad
Tel Asur	Mesopotamia, 1914–8

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS, 125th REGIMENT

Captain Belts. November 20th, 1817–July 18th, 1821.
Captain Daubeney. October 15th–27th, 1821.
Captain Edsall. January 11th, 1822–September 16th, 1826.
Lt.-Colonel Taylor. September 16th, 1826–1837.
Major (afterwards Lt.-Colonel) T. Marshall. 1837–September 22nd, 1843.
Lt.-Colonel A. Woodburn, C.B.[1] September 22nd, 1843–1853.
Major John Jackson[2] (afterwards Lt.-Colonel John Jackson, C.B.). 1853–1857.
Major G. H. Robertson[3] (afterwards Lt.-Colonel G. H. Robertson, C.B., A.D.C. to the Queen). October 22nd, 1857–January 10th, 1862.
Lt.-Colonel Stewart. January 1st, 1864–March 24th, 1866.
Major A. B. Little[4] (afterwards Brigadier-General A. B. Little, C.B.). March 24th, 1866–December 7th, 1878.
Lt.-Colonel Chapman. January 2nd, 1879–December 1st, 1881.
Lt.-Colonel Jameson. June 20th, 1882–June 13th, 1884.
Lt.-Colonel Withers.[5] June 13th, 1884–May 19th, 1885.
Lt.-Colonel C. C. Pemberton.[6] May 19th, 1885–September 16th, 1887.

[1] Died, October 1st, 1860.
[2] Died in England, 1886.
[3] Died, January 10th, 1862.
[4] Retired June 5th, 1880.
[5] Retired on M.C. June 4th, 1887.
[6] Transferred to 8th Bombay N.I.

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Lt.-Colonel H. S. Tandy.[1] September 16th, 1887–May 12th, 1894.

Lt.-Colonel L. G. Beckenham.[2] August 24th, 1894–May 12th, 1903.

Lt.-Colonel C. I. Fry, 2nd in Command, 4th Bombay Rifles (afterwards Major-General C. I. Fry, C.B., Hon. Colonel, 5th Bn. Rajputana Rifles). June 23rd, 1903–March 21st, 1910.

Major H. E. C. B. Nepean. December 9th, 1910–January 1st, 1911 (acting).

Lt.-Colonel (afterwards Brigadier-General) A. H. Dennys.[3] January 1st, 1911–January 23rd, 1916.

Lt.-Colonel (afterwards Brigadier-General) F. P. C. Keily, C.M.G., D.S.O.[4] January 23rd, 1917–October 19th, 1920.

Lt.-Colonel W. L. S. Meiklejohn. July 5th, 1921–February 1st, 1925.

Lt.-Colonel F. H. Maynard, M.C. 1925–9.

[1] Appointed D.A.G., Bombay Army.
[2] Temporary Lt.-Colonel, December 17th, 1895. Confirmed June 30th, 1900.
[3] Appointment to command 19th Brigade.
[4] Confirmed February 12th, 1917. Brigadier-General, 234th Brigade, October 3rd, 1919.

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APPENDIX V

THE GREAT WAR

During the period the regiment was overseas, the following honours and decorations were gained:

Brevet Colonel ..	.. Lt.-Colonel F. P. C. Keily, C.M.G., D.S.O.
Brevet Lt.-Colonel	.. Major C. H. Clutterbuck
C.M.G. ..	.. Lt.-Colonel F. P. C. Keily
C.I.E. ..	.. Major E. J. Mollison
D.S.O. ..	.. Major F. P. C. Keily
	Capt. R. F. Gow, I.M.S.
	Lieut. (Actg. Capt.) T. W. Rees
M.C. and Bar ..	.. Capt. D. T. Macdonald
M.C. ..	.. Capt. F. H. Maynard
	Capt. L. W. Hughes
	Lieut. J. H. Lang
	Lieut. T. W. Rees
	2/Lieut. J. A. C. Kiddle
	Lieut. H. E. B. Priestly
	Lieut. J. B. Nelson
	Subedar Ruda Ram
	Capt. W. Odell, 123rd O. Rifles

Order of British India (2nd Class)

Subedar-Major Umar Din Subedar Nizam-ud-Din

Indian Order of Merit (2nd Class)

3100 Rfm. Bal Singh
Jem. Munshi Singh
1771 Hav. Sher Khan
2436 Rfm. Goru Ram
Ag. Sub.-Major Jahan Shah
1730 Nk. Amir Hussain
2394 L/Nk. Firoz Khan
3895 L/Nk. Sukh Singh
Ag. Sub.-Major Nizam-ud-Din
Jem. Rahim Ali
Jem. Sheobaksh Singh

Indian Distinguished Service Medal

2602 Rfm. Gul Sher
Jem. Munshi Singh
1922 Hav. Hakim Khan
2044 Hav. Tukha Ram
2803 C/Hav. Madat Khan
2020 Hav. Hukma Ram
3766 Rfm. Parsa Ram
2370 L/Nk. Sheochand Ram
2327 L/Nk. Mukanda Ram
2398 L/Nk. Jeysat Ram
3535 Rfm. Nawab Khan
2261 Hav. Raghunath Singh

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INDIAN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL (*Continued*)

3482 Rfm. Nanu Singh
1861 Hav. Bishna Ram
Sub. Allah Dad Khan
Jem. Nizam-ud-Din
Jem. Hukma Ram
2538 Hav. Hari Singh
2958 Hav. Jhobar Ram
Jem. Anna Singh
1744 Hav. Bachan Singh

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

474 Nk. Ghulam Nabi
2482 Nk. Bal Singh
2852 Hav. Katte Bay
3088 Nk. Pala Singh
2216 L/Hav. Kale Khan
2051 Hav. Imratha Ram
3041 Nk. Jal Singh
2261 C/Hav. Raghunath Singh
2960 C/Hav. Mirza Khan
1421 L/Nk. Sher Jang
2241 C. Hav.-Maj. Mangala Ram
2746 Hav. Bachan Singh
1783 Hav. Ladhu Singh
2233 Hav. Jaffar Khan
3100 Hav. Bal Singh
2370 Hav. Sheochand Ram
3280 Nk. Tara Ram
1965 L/Nk. Jethu Singh
4069 Rfm. Nathu Khan
2444 Rfm. Charanji Singh
4403 Rfm. Gopal Singh
4100 Rfm. Barkat Ali
1121 Nk. Megha Ram
4097 Rfm. Sukhdeo Ram
3287 Rfm. Nand Ram
2810 Hav. Bishan Singh
1861 C/Hav. Bishna Ram
2355 Hav. Khan Beg
2313 Hav. Ranjha Khan
2923 Hav. Nizam-ud-Din
2856 Rfm. Inam Din
1973 C/Hav. Ali Mohd
2753 Hav. Ramnath Singh
2159 Hav. Harlal Ram
2229 C/Hav. Dula Ram
2816 Hav. Abdul Ghani
3058 Regt. Q.M. Hav. Nauroz Khan
1753 Hav. Hirolal Ram
2894 Hav. Ghulam Mohd
2011 Hav. Bega Ram
2813 Hav. Mujaffar Khan
2750 Nk. Bhoru Ganga Ram
2468 L/Nk. Fateh Ali
3435 L/Nk. Ghulam Hussain
1624 Rfm. Mot Singh
3248 Rfm. Sirkham Khan
3496 Rfm. Fateh Mohd
2969 Rfm. Gopal Singh
2233 Rfm. Jojha Ram
4163 Rfm. Chanwa Ram
1904 Rfm. Sawar Singh
1380 Hav. Karim Bax

In addition to the above, nine foreign decorations were gained by officers and men of the regiment, and the following were mentioned in despatches:

Lieut. W. M. Skilliter

1848 Rfm. Fazal Din
1771 Rfm. Sher Khan
2436 Rfm. Goru Ram
2674 Rfm. Mukna Ram
3264 Hav. Bakar Khan
Sub. Gopi Singh
3270 Rfm. Mohd. Khan
2917 Rfm. Munasih Ali
Jem. Nizam-ud-Din
Sub. Ramlal Singh
2394 L/Nk. Firoz Khan
2886 Brig.-Maj. Ahmad Khan
2398 Rfm. Jaisa Ram
3766 Rfm. Parsa Ram

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1774 Hav. Bachan Singh.
2691 Rfm. Mangana Ram
2327 Rfm. Mukanda Ram
2637 C/Hav. Partab Singh
2128 Hav. Ramnath Singh
2819 Rfm. Sheodhan Singh

Officers and Men who Fell in the Great War

The following officers and men of the regiment, and attached personnel, gave up their lives during the Great War:

British Officers

Captain G. H. Stevenson
Captain D. T. Macdonald, M.C.
Captain W. Odell, M.C., 123rd O. Rifles
Lieut. H. Minchin
Lieut. J. B. Nelson, M.C.
Lieut. B. R. Harman
2/Lieut. J. L. Harris
2/Lieut. C. N. Harris
2/Lieut. G. N. Haynes
2/Lieut. P. C. Peacock
2/Lieut. R. I. Burton

Indian Officers

Subedar Binja Ram
Subedar (Actg. S.M.) Gopi Singh
Subedar Shenath Singh, 123rd O. Rifles
Subedar Munshi Singh, I.O.M., I.O.S.M.
Subedar, (Actg. S.M.) Jahan Shah, I.O.M.
Jemadar Bhim Singh
Jemadar Khema Ram
Jemadar Birbal Ram, 123rd O. Rifles
Jemadar Hira Ram
Jemadar Sher Khan, I.O.M.
Jemadar Pahlad Singh
Jemadar Walidad, 124th Bal. Inf.
Jemadar Narain Singh, I.O.S.M.

and 477 Indian other ranks

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